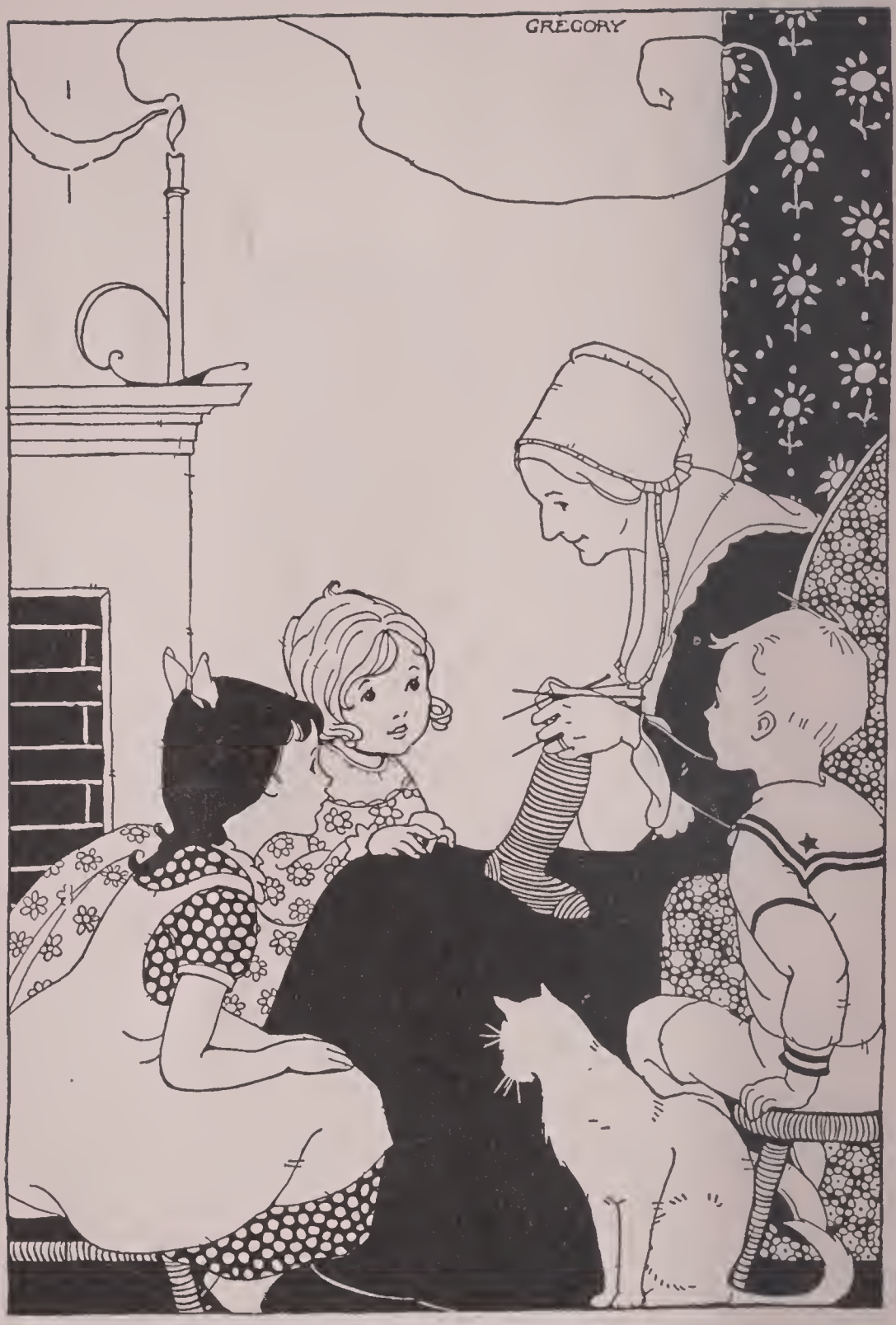
Early Candlelight Stories

By Stella C. Shetter

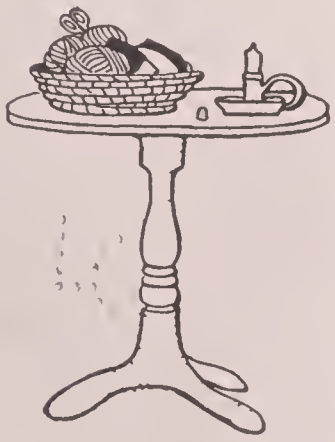


Bobby and Alice and Pink drew their stools closer and waited eagerly for Grandma to begin

EARLY CANDLELIGHT STORIES

By
STELLA C. SHETTER

Illustrated by
DOROTHY LAKE GREGORY



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Grandma's Room ready for the housewarming

EARLY CANDLELIGHT STORIES

GRANDMA ARRIVES

Grandma had come to spend the winter, and Bobby and Alice and Pink were watching her fix up her room. It was the guest room, and the children had always thought it a beautiful room, with its soft blue rug, wicker chairs, and pretty cretonne draperies. But Grandma had had all the furniture taken out, and the rug, carefully rolled up and wrapped in thick paper to keep the moths out, had been carried to the attic.

Then Grandma—but Mother called Bobby and Alice and Pink to come and get their wraps and go out to play a while.

Grandma, seeing them edge reluctantly toward the head of the stairs, said cheerfully, as she bustled about unpacking the great box that held her "things," "Never mind, dears. Run out and play now, and tonight we'll have a regular housewarming. Come to my

room at seven o'clock and we will have a little party."

Just as the clock in the hall downstairs struck the first stroke of seven, Alice rapped loudly on Grandma's door.

Grandma opened the door immediately and the children stepped in — then stared in astonishment. They had never seen a room like this before. In place of the blue rug was a gayly colored rag carpet. The bed, to which had been added a feather tick, was twice as high as any they had ever seen. It was covered with a handmade coverlet of blue and white. Patchwork cushions were on the chairs, and crocheted covers on bureau and chiffonier. The windows were filled with blooming geraniums, and in one window hung a canary in a gilt cage. On a round braided rug before the fire lay a gray cat, asleep. By a low rocker stood a little table that held a work basket running over with bright-colored patches, bits of lace, balls of scarlet yarn, knitting needles, pieces of velvet, silk, and wool. On the chiffonier stood a basket filled with big, red apples, polished till they shone, and beside the apples was a plate covered with a napkin.

"Well, well," said Grandma, "here you are, every one of you! Just on time, too. Come right in and see my house and meet my family. This is Betsy." She touched the cat gently and Betsy lifted her head and started to purr. "I raised her from a kitten and brought her here in a basket all the way on the train. One conductor wouldn't let me keep her in the coach with me, so I went out and rode in the baggage car with Betsy."

"Did you bring the bird, too?" asked Pink, smoothing Betsy's fur.

"No, I just got the bird a little while ago. He has n't even a name yet. I thought maybe I'd call him Dicky. That's a nice name for a bird, don't you think so? My baby sent me the bird and the flowers, too. Are n't they lovely?"

"Have you a baby, Grandma?" asked Alice, looking around the room wonderingly.

"Yes, I have a baby, but he isn't little any more. Still he is my baby all the same, the youngest of my ten children. Was n't it thoughtful of him to send me the bird and the flowers?"

Alice and Bobby and Pink looked at one another. They knew their daddy had sent

the flowers, for they had heard Grandma thank him for them. The idea of their big, broad-shouldered daddy being anyone's baby seemed funny to them, and they giggled.

"Say, Grandma, he's some baby, all right," Bobby remarked.

"You can't rock him to sleep the way I do my baby," observed Pink.

"Not now, but I used to," said Grandma. Then she brought three stools from the corner—low, round stools covered with carpet. "You children sit on these stools and I'll sit in this chair and we'll spend the evening getting acquainted. You must tell me all about yourselves."

The children told Grandma about their school and their playmates, their dog and their playhouse, about how they went camping in summer time and what they did on Christmas and Easter, and about the flying machine that flew over the town on the Fourth of July, and about the Sunday school picnic. When they finally stopped, breathless, Grandma looked so impressed that Bobby said pityingly, "You didn't have so many things to do when you were little, did you, Grandma?"

"Well, now, I don't know about that," Grandma answered slowly. "We didn't have the same things to do, but we had good times, too."

"Tell us about them," Alice begged.

"When I was a little girl," Grandma began, " I lived in the country on a large farm. All around our house were fields and woods. You might think I would have been lonely, but I never was. You see, I had always lived there. Then I had six older brothers and sisters, and one brother, Charlie, was just two years older than I was. And there were so many things to do! The horses to ride to water and the cows to bring from the pasture field. On cool mornings Charlie and I would stand on the spots where the cows had lain all night, to get our feet warm before starting back home. I had a pet lamb that followed me wherever I went, and we had a dog—old Duke. He helped us get the cows and kept the chickens out of the yard and barked when a stranger came in sight. And when the dinner bell by the kitchen door rang, how he did howl!

"And the cats! You never saw such cats, they were so fat and round and sleek. No

wonder, for they had milk twice a day out of a hollow rock that stood by the barnyard gate.

"And birds were everywhere. Near the well, high in the air, fastened to a long pole, was a bird house. Truman and Joe had made it, and it was just like a little house, with tiny windows and doors and a wee bit of a porch where the birds would sit to sun themselves.

"Then there were the chickens to look after, often a hundred baby chicks to feed and put in their coops at night. And in the spring what fun we had hunting turkey hens' nests! In February we tapped the sugar trees and boiled down the sap into maple sugar and sirup. We had Easter egg hunts and school Christmas treats, and in the fall we gathered in the nuts for winter—chestnuts, hickory nuts, walnuts."

Grandma paused a moment and glanced at the clock on the mantel.

"Dear me," she exclaimed in surprise, "see what time it is! We must have our refreshments right away. Bobby, will you pass the apples? And, Alice, under the napkin are some ginger cookies that I brought with me. You may pass them, please, and Pink and I will be the company.

"These apples," went on Grandma, helping herself to one, "are out of my orchard. I sent two barrels of them to your daddy, and every night before we go to bed we will each eat one. 'An apple a day,' you know, 'keeps the doctor away.' "

When they had finished and were saying good night, Bobby said, "Lots of things did happen when you were a little girl, Grandma. I wish you'd tell us more."

"Not tonight," said Grandma, "It's bed-time now, but come back some other night. If you still want me to tell you more about when I was a little girl, tap on my door three times, like this, but if you only come to call, tap once, like this."

Next time we'll see how often they tapped on Grandma's door. Can you guess?

A WHISTLING GIRL

The next evening as Grandma sat before the fire knitting on a red mitten, she was startled by three sharp knocks on her door.

"Why, good evening," she said, when she had opened the door to admit Bobby and Alice and Pink. "Here you are wanting a story, and I have n't thought of a thing to tell you. Now you tell me what happened at school today, and by that time I shall have thought of something to tell you."

So Alice told Grandma about chapel that morning. She told her about the recitations and songs by the children and of a lady who had whistled "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "America."

"Well, well, was n't that nice!" Grandma said. "I should have liked to hear that. I always admired to hear any one whistle. I believe I 'll tell you tonight about the time I whistled in meeting."

The children drew their stools a little closer, and Grandma began:

"When I was a little girl, I wanted more than anything else to be able to whistle. I

kept this ambition to myself because it was n't considered ladylike for girls to whistle. My mother often said,

"A whistling girl and a crowing hen
Always come to some bad end."

"So I never told anyone, not even my brother Charlie, that I wanted to whistle. But when I hunted turkey hens' nests, or went after the cows, or picked berries, I had my lips pursed all the time trying to whistle as my brothers did. But, though I tried and tried, I never succeeded in making a sound.

"One Sunday in meeting I got awfully tired. To a little girl the sermons were very long and tiresome in those days. For a while I sat still and quiet, watching Preacher Hill's beard jerk up and down as he talked and looking at the queer shadows his long coat tails made on the wall. But it was warm and close in the church, and after a while I grew drowsy.

" 'Oh, dear!' I thought to myself, 'I must n't go to sleep. I must keep awake somehow.' Then I thought about whistling. I would practice whistling to myself—under my breath.

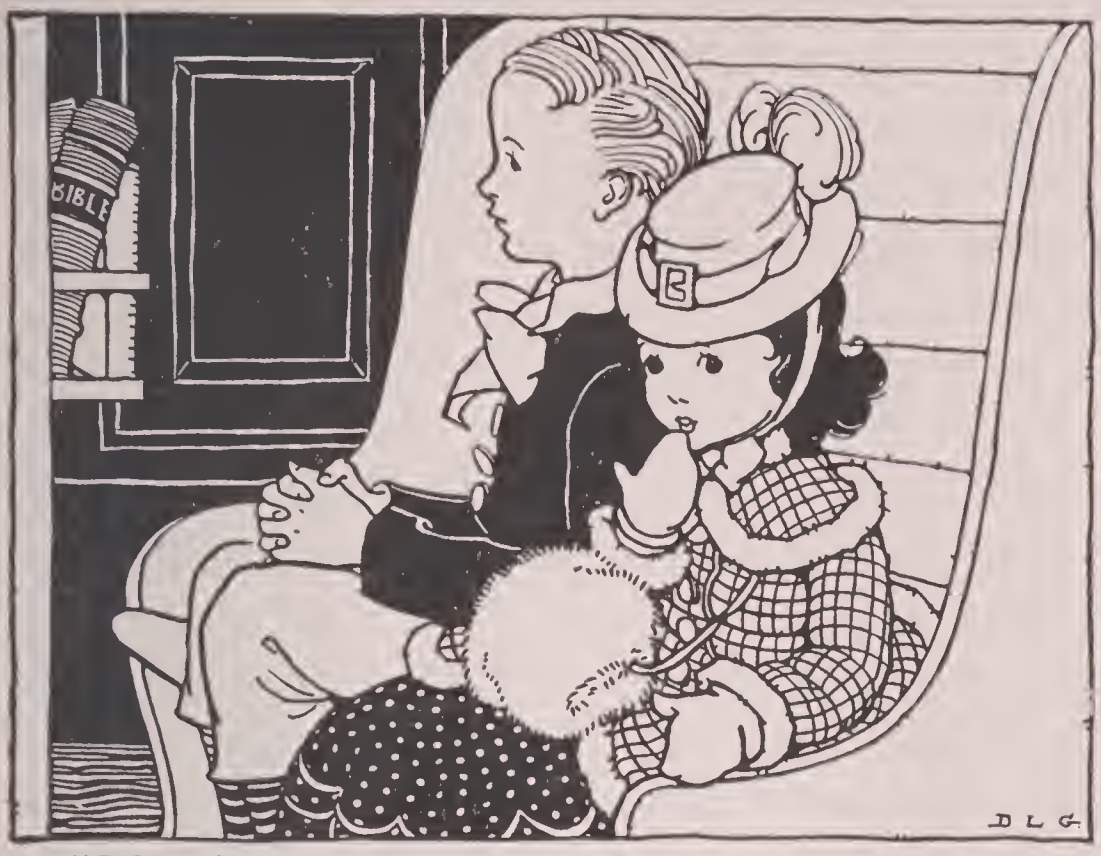
"The seats were high-backed and we sat far to the front. I could not see any one

except the preacher and John Strang, who kept company with sister Belle. John sat in a chair at the end of the choir facing the congregation, and several times I noticed him looking curiously at me as if he wondered what I was doing. I would draw in my breath very slowly and then let it out again. Of course I never dreamed of making a sound, and no one could have been more surprised than I was when there came from my lips a loud clear whistle as sweet as a bird note.

"The preacher stopped talking. Mother looked embarrassed. Father's face turned red with mortification. Sister Belle put her handkerchief up to her face, and Charlie sat up as straight and stiff as if he had swallowed a ramrod.

"As for me, I wished I could sink through the floor and disappear. I thought everybody was looking right at me. I was sorry and I was frightened, too. What would Father and Mother say to me?

"When preaching was over, all of us except Mother went right out to the sled and wrapped up in comforts and robes for the cold ride home. Mother stayed behind to visit and invite people home to dinner just as she



"I drew in my breath very slowly and then let it out again"

always did. I was glad when we started. It was a dreary ride. Father drove, and he sat so stern and silent that no one dared to speak.

"I hurried right upstairs to change my dress as I always did. Then, because I was so miserable, I threw myself across my bed and cried. I had disgraced Father and Mother. Nothing that they could do would be bad enough for me. I was aroused by sister Belle's voice. She was complaining to sister Aggie, who had stayed at home to get dinner.

" 'I don't see why Charlie can't behave himself once in a while. Now our whole day

is spoiled, and I had asked John and Isabel for dinner, too. You know how sad it always makes Father if he has to punish one of the boys, and the worst of it is that Charlie denies doing it. I could shake Charlie good myself. You can't believe, Aggie, how everyone looked at us. I was that ashamed!'

"Charlie being accused in place of me! This was something that I had never dreamed of. I jumped up and rushed past the two girls downstairs, through the empty sitting room into the kitchen, where Mother stood looking out a window, still in her gray silk dress. I caught her hand.

" 'Charlie did n't do it, Mother,' I said. 'I did it.'

" 'Oh, Sarah, you cannot whistle, dear,' said Mother reproachfully. She drew me to her and smoothed my hair and tried to comfort me, but I broke away from her and ran into the kitchen chamber where Father sat talking to Charlie. Father looked stern and Charlie sulky and cross, and no wonder, poor boy, for he was guilty of enough things without being accused of something he did not do.

" 'Father!' I cried wildly. 'Charlie did not whistle in meeting. I did it.'

"Mother and the girls had followed me, and they all, even Charlie, stared at me in amazement. It was plain they did not believe me. They thought I was trying to shield Charlie.

"'I did whistle,' I said, crying. 'I can whistle. I tell you I can whistle.'

" 'Then whistle,' said Father sternly.

"And how I did try to whistle! I puffed my cheeks and twisted and turned my mouth and blew and blew, but I could n't make a sound, not a single sound.

"Father looked so hurt and sorry that I longed to throw myself into his arms and make him believe me. You see, it looked to Father as if Charlie and I were both telling stories. Father said we were only making things worse and ordered us all out of the room.

"In the sitting room we found Truman and Joe, who had been tending the horses, and John and Isabel Strang, who had come around past their house to let their family out of the sled before coming on to our house for dinner.

"The minute I saw John I drew Mother's head down and whispered to her, 'Ask John. He knows, he saw me do it;' and Mother in a

hesitating way said, 'John, do you know who whistled in meeting this morning?'

"John turned as red as our old turkey gobbler and looked at me.

" 'Why, I feel pretty sure,' he said, 'but I'd hate to say.'

" 'Oh, never mind that!' I burst out. 'I've told, and they won't believe I can whistle. They think it was Charlie.'

"Then, of course, John told all he knew. He had been watching me all the time, as I had thought, and was looking right at me when I whistled. Father was called in, and you may be sure he was glad to find that both his children had been telling the truth.

" 'It's all right, Sarah,' he said, 'if you did n't mean to.' But Mother made me promise not to try to whistle any more.

"Well, I declare! I finished just on time. Mother's calling you to bed. Here, don't forget your 'apple a day.' Now run along like good children, and some other time I'll tell you another story."

CHASED BY WOLVES

"Seems to me you kiddies go to bed earlier than you used to," their father remarked one evening when Bobby and Alice and Pink interrupted his reading to kiss him good night.

"We don't go to bed," Pink explained. "We go to Grandma's room. She tells us a story every night."

"Why, of course, I remember now. Is n't that fine, though? A story every night! Did she ever tell you a wolf story? Grandma knows a pippin of a wolf story. She used to tell it to me when I was a little boy. Ask her to tell you about the time she was chased by wolves."

And a few minutes later Grandma began the story.

"It was in the spring. Father was making garden, and he broke the hoe handle. All the boys were away from home helping a neighbor, so Father wanted Aggie or Belle to take the hoe to have a handle put in at the blacksmith shop at Nebo Cross Roads a mile away. But the girls were getting ready to

go to a quilting, and I begged to be allowed to take the hoe to the blacksmith shop.

"Mother was afraid at first, but Father said there was nothing to hurt me, and Mother finally gave in. So right after dinner, carrying the hoe and a poke of cookies to eat if I got hungry, I started out.

"I was to leave the hoe at the shop and go on down the road to Strangs' to wait till the hoe was mended. I can remember yet how important I felt going off alone like that. I picked wild flowers and munched cookies and sang all the songs I knew.

"Mr. Carson, the blacksmith, said it would be a couple of hours before the hoe would be ready, and I went down to Strangs' to wait. But when I got there I found the house all locked up and no one at home. I sat down on the steps to wait for some one to come, but the heat and the quiet made me sleepy so I got up and moved around the yard. I was lonely there by myself. I walked around looking at the flowers and the garden and the chickens and played a while with a kitten I found sleeping in the sun. I thought that afternoon would never end. Surely I had been there two hours. I started for the blacksmith shop. Maybe it

would be closed. I ran all the way. Mr. Carson looked surprised when I asked for the hoe.

I played a while with a kitten

" 'Why, it's only been a half-hour since you went away,' he said.

"I went back to Strangs', and this time I was determined to wait a long time. After a while Isabel Strang came home. She had been at the quilting, but all the rest of the family had gone away to stay several days. Isabel was going to our house to spend the night if she got through the evening's work in time. She had come past our house, and Mother had told her to keep me all night

with her for company if she could not get back before dark and to send me home early in the morning.

"Isabel hurried, and while she milked the cows and fed the pigs and chickens and got supper I went after the hoe.

"It was growing late when we were ready to start home, but Isabel said we could make it before dark.

"We followed the road half a mile and then took a short cut through the woods up Sugar Creek. We had come out of the woods and were halfway across a big pasture field when from behind us we heard a sound that made us stop in terror. We listened. It came again. It was the cry of a wolf! I had often heard a wolf howl, but I had always been safe at home, and even then it had scared me.

"Again and again came the long drawn-out howl from the woods we had just left.

"Isabel took my hand and we ran as fast as we could toward the little creek that ran through the field. It had been years and years since a pack of wolves had been seen in our neighborhood, but before we reached the foot-log another howl and another and another had been added to the first.

"Looking back over my shoulder as I ran, I saw a skulking form come out of the woods and start across the field. Isabel saw it, too.

" 'We'll have to stop, Sarah,' she said. 'We'll have to climb a tree.'

"There was a slender young hickory a little this side of the run. Isabel lifted me as high as she could and I caught a branch and pulled myself up into the tree. I turned to help Isabel when, to my horror, I saw that she could never make it. A whole pack of wolves loping across the field were almost upon her.

"Catching up the hoe, Isabel ran for the foot-log. She had barely reached the middle of it when the wolves halted at the creek bank. A few of them had stopped at my tree and were howling up at me. If all had stopped, it would have given Isabel a chance to get into one of the trees on the other side of the creek.

"But she could n't do it now. She walked back and forth on the log, brandishing the hoe in the cruel eyes of the wolves. The wolves that had stopped under my tree soon joined their friends on the bank, and Isabel called out to me, 'Do not make any noise, Sarah, and they will forget you are there.' I remembered hearing my father tell about some

wolves that had gnawed a young tree in two, and I clung there in fear and trembling.

"Isabel held her own all right until one of the bolder wolves swam across the creek and was soon followed by others. Then Isabel had to fight them at both ends of the foot-log. It was dark now, and Isabel, striking at the wolves from first one side and then the other, tried to cheer me up all the time.

" 'Help will soon come, don't be afraid,' she said over and over again. She even tried to make me laugh by saying, 'Now watch me hit this saucy old fellow on the nose. There, that surprised you, didn't it, Mr. Wolf?' as she hit him a sharp blow and he fell back.

"What if the wolves should leap on Isabel? Or she might get dizzy and fall in the water. When would help come to us in this lonely, out-of-the-way place? My folks would think I had stayed the night with Isabel, and there was no one at home at Isabel's.

"Dared I get down and go for help? I peered through the darkness and shook all over when I thought that more wolves might be hidden there. Hardly knowing what I did, I let myself down to the lower limb and then dropped with a soft thud to the ground.

"Without waiting a second I started back the way we had come. How I ran and ran! I was nearly through the woods when I heard something running behind me. I went faster and it went faster, too. Suddenly I tripped and fell and I heard a friendly little whinney at my side. It was our pet colt that had been running behind me. I put my arm around his neck for a second until I got my breath. Then I climbed the fence and was on the road.

I was n't quite so afraid here as I had been in the woods, but I never stopped running till I got home. I was so worn out that I fell panting on the kitchen floor, but I made them understand Isabel's danger. Father and the boys caught up their guns and went hurrying across the hill to her aid.

"They drove the wolves away and brought Isabel home in safety, and that was the last pack of wolves ever seen around there.

"Well, well, see what time it is! Now run along to bed and go right to sleep without talking the least little bit, or I'm afraid Mother won't let you come to see me tomorrow evening. That would be a pity, for I've got the best story for tomorrow evening about—well, you just wait and see."

THE YELLOW GOWN

The next evening when the children came to Grandma's room Bobby brought his new sweater — black with broad yellow stripes — to show her.

"Yellow," said Grandma admiringly. "I always did like yellow, it's such a cheerful color. The first really pretty dress I ever had was yellow.

"It was just about this shade, maybe a mite deeper — more of an orange color. It was worsted — a very fine piece of all-wool cashmere. Until then I had never had anything but dark wool dresses — browns or blues made from the older girls' dresses — and I did love bright colors.

"Sister Belle was to be married in the spring and all winter Mother and Belle and Aggie had sewed on her new clothes. Nearly everything was ready but the wedding gown, and it was to be a present from Father's younger sister, Aunt Louisa, who lived in Clayville.

"Belle was delighted, because she said Aunt Louisa would be sure to pick something new and stylish.

"My big brother, Stanley, went to Clayville one cold, snowy day in February, and Aunt Louisa sent the dress goods out by him. I remember we were at supper when he came. I had the toothache and was holding a bag of hot salt to my face and trying to eat at the same time.

"Mother ran to take Stanley's bundles and help him off with his great-coat, and Aggie set a place at the table for him. But before he sat down he tossed a package to Belle. 'From Aunt Louisa,' he said.

"Belle gave a cry of delight and tore the package open. Then suddenly the happy look faded from her face. She pushed the package aside and, laying her head right down on the table among the dishes, she burst into tears.

"Aunt Louisa had sent Belle a yellow wedding dress!

"When Mother held it up for us to see, I thought it was the most beautiful color I had ever seen and wondered why Belle cried. I soon learned.

"Belle had light brown hair and freckles, and yellow was not becoming to her. To prove it, she held the goods up to her face.

" 'It does make your hair look dead and sort of colorless,' Aggie agreed.

" 'And your freckles stand out as if they were starting to meet a fellow,' Charlie put in.

"At this Belle began to cry again, and Father said that she did not have to wear a yellow dress to be married in if she didn't want to. She should have a white dress. But this didn't seem to comfort Belle a bit, for she declared that she wouldn't hurt Aunt Louisa's feelings by not wearing the yellow.

"My tooth got worse, and for the next few days I could think of nothing else. Mother poulticed my jaw and put medicine in my tooth, but nothing helped it. I cried and cried and couldn't sleep at night, and Mother couldn't sleep. At last she told Father that he would have to take me to Clayville to have the tooth pulled. There was fine sledding, and early the next morning Father and I set out. The last thing Mother said to Father, as she put a hot brick to my feet and wrapped me, head and all, in a thick comfort, was, " 'As soon as the tooth is out, John, take her over to Louisa's till you get ready to start home.

"The roads were smooth as glass, Father was a fast driver, and it did n't seem long till we got to town. My tooth was soon out—it hardly hurt at all—and then Father took

The roads were smooth as glass, Father was a fast driver

me to Aunt Louisa's. We all liked Aunt Louisa. She was very fond of children and had none of her own.

"After dinner we sat by the sitting-room fire and Aunt Louisa cut paper dolls out of stiff writing paper for me and made pink tissue paper dresses for them. The dresses were pasted on. I could not take them off and put them on as Alice and Pink do theirs.

"As she worked, Aunt Louisa asked me about everything at home and about Belle's clothes and the wedding.

"'Has she got her wedding dress made yet?' she asked.

"'No, ma'am', I replied, 'she says she can't bear to cut into it. She hates the very sight of it.'

"'Well, I declare!' exclaimed Aunt Louisa in surprise.

"'It doesn't become her,' I explained carefully. 'She says it makes her look a sickly green.' And then I went on to tell Aunt Louisa everything they had all said, and ended up with, 'Belle says she won't hold John to his promise to marry her until he has seen her in that yellow dress.'

"'What does she wear it for if she doesn't like it?' asked Aunt Louisa tartly.

"'Father said she didn't have to wear it if she didn't want to, that if she wanted to be married in white, he'd get her a white dress. But Belle said she wouldn't hurt your feelings by not wearing it for anything in the world.'

"Suddenly Aunt Louisa began to laugh. She threw her head back and laughed and

laughed and laughed. I didn't know what to make of her.

"'I think it's a beautiful color,' I said consolingly.

"'And you could wear it, too, with your dark hair and eyes and fair skin. What was I thinking about to send a color like that to poor Belle? I'll tell you!' she cried, jumping up and letting my paper dolls fall to the floor. 'I'll buy another dress for Belle, and you shall have the yellow one, Sarah.'

"She left me in the kitchen with Mettie, the hired girl, while she went over town. Mettie was baking cookies, and she let me dust the sugar on and put the raisins in the middle and I had a real nice time.

"The second dress was white cashmere with bands of pearl trimming and wide silk lace for the neck and wrists.

"When Aunt Louisa kissed me good-by, she whispered in my ear, 'Tell Belle the trimming is because she was so thoughtful about hurting my feelings and I want her to look her best on her wedding day. And, Sarah, tell your mother to make up the yellow for you with a high shirred waist and low round neck. That is the newest style for

children. And be sure to tell her I said not to dare put it in the dye pot.'

"As soon as we got home I gave the new dress to Belle. Mother was astonished, and Belle looked ready to cry again, till Father told them Aunt Louisa was n't offended at all. Then Mother was pleased, and Belle was simply wild about the new dress.

"'Take the yellow and welcome to it, Sarah,' she said to me when I had told her Aunt Louisa wanted me to have it.

"'I'll have to color it,' Mother said, 'She could n't wear that ridiculous shade.'

"'No, no, Mother, please don't!' I cried. 'Aunt Louisa said not to dye it. She said it would become me the way it is.'

"'Tush, tush!' said Mother severely, 'You are too little to talk of things becoming you.' But she did n't dye it, and a few weeks later at sister Belle's wedding I wore the yellow dress made just the way Aunt Louisa said to make it.

"And now, 'To bed, to bed, says sleepy head,' and we'll have another story some other night."

A WAR STORY

"Well, well," said Grandma one evening when Bobby and Alice and Pink came to her room for their usual bedtime story, "I don't know what to tell you about tonight."

"Tell us a war story," suggested Bobby eagerly.

"Maybe I might tell you a war story," agreed Grandma, "a war story of a time long ago." And she picked up her knitting and began slowly:

"When the Civil War broke out I was a very little girl. Of course there had been lots of talk of war, but the first thing I remember about it was when we heard that Fort Sumter had been fired on. It was a bright, sunshiny morning in the spring. I was helping Father rake the dead leaves off the garden when I saw a man coming up the road on horseback. I told Father, and he dropped his rake and went over to the fence. In those days it was n't as it is now. News traveled slowly—no telephones, no trains, no buggies. And this young man, who had been to Clayville to get his marriage license,

brought us the news that Fort Sumter had been fired on.

"Father went straight into the house to tell Mother, and after a while he and my big brother, Joe, saddled their horses and rode away. I thought they were going right off to war and started to cry, and then I laughed instead when our big Dominique rooster flew up on the hen-house roof, flapped his wings, and crowed and crowed. A great many men and boys rode by our house that day on their way to Clayville, and when Father and Joe came back next day Joe had volunteered and been accepted and he stayed at home only long enough to pack his clothes and say good-by to us.

"There was n't much sleep in our house that night, and I lay in my trundle-bed, beside Father's and Mother's bed, and listened to them talking, talking, until I thought it must surely be morning. I went to sleep and wakened again and they were still talking. Finally I could hear Father's regular breathing and knew that he had gone to sleep at last. In a little bit Mother slipped out of bed and went into the hall. I thought she was going for a drink and followed her,

but she went into Stanley's room, which had been Joe's room, too, until that night.

"Mother bent over Stanley and spoke his name softly and he wakened and started up in bed.

"'What is it, Mother?' he whispered, frightened.

"'Stanley,' Mother said slowly, 'I want you to promise me that you won't go to war without my consent.'

"Stanley laughed out loud in relief.

"'Gee, Mother, you gave me a scare!' he said. 'I thought some one was sick or something. The war'll be over long before I'm old enough to go.' He was going on sixteen then.

"'It won't do any harm to promise then,' Mother persisted, and Stanley promised.

"I crept back to bed and pulled the covers up over my head.

"But Stanley was mistaken about the war being over soon. The war did n't stop. It went on and on. Two years and more passed, and Stanley was eighteen. Boys of that age were being accepted for service, but Stanley never said a word about volunteering.

"Shortly after his eighteenth birthday there came a change in him. He was not

like himself at all. He had always been a lively boy, full of fun and mischief, but now he was very quiet. He never mentioned the war any more, and often dashed out of the room when every one was talking excitedly about the latest news from the battlefield. He avoided the soldiers home on furlough, did n't seem to care to read Joe's letters, and as more and more of his friends enlisted he became gloomy and downhearted.

"We could all see as time went on that Father was disappointed in Stanley. He was always saying how much better it was for a young man to enlist than to wait for the draft. The very word 'draft' had for Father a disgraceful sound.

"I think Mother must have thought it was Stanley's promise to her that was worrying him, for one day she came out to the barn where Stanley was shelling corn and I was picking out the biggest grains to play 'Fox and Geese' with. Mother told Stanley she released him from his promise, but he did n't seem glad at all. He only said, 'Don't you worry, Mother, I'm not going to war.'

"'I was troubled about Joe that night,' Mother said. 'I thought I could n't bear

for you to go, too. But you are older now and you must do what you think best.'

One day two recruiting officers came out to Nebo Cross Roads

"As Mother went out of the barn there were tears in her eyes and I knew in that moment that she would rather have Stanley go to war than have him afraid to go.

"They were forming a new company in Clayville, and one day two recruiting officers came out to Nebo Cross Roads. Father let Truman take Charlie and me over to see them. It was raining, and I can see those two men yet standing there in the rain. One had a flute and the other had a drum. They

played reveille and taps and guard mount and 'The Star-Spangled Banner' and a new song we had never heard before, 'Tenting on the Old Camp Ground.' And how that music stirred the folks! They had to use two wagons to haul the recruits into Clayville that night.

"That evening when I was hunting eggs in the barn I found Stanley lying face down in the hay. He was crying! I could hardly believe my eyes. I went a little nearer and I saw for sure that his shoulders were shaking with sobs. But even while I watched him he got to his feet and began rubbing his right arm. I often saw Stanley working with his arm. He would rub it and swing it backward and forward and strike out with his fist as if he were going to hit some one a blow. He did n't mind me watching him, and I never told anyone about it. He had broken that arm the winter before, and I had often seen him working with it after he had stopped wearing it in a sling.

"I wondered to myself why, if Father and Mother thought Stanley was afraid to fight, they did not ask him and find out. He knew why he did n't enlist—he could tell

them. At last I decided if they would n't do it themselves I'd do it for them. So the next time I was alone with Stanley, I said, 'Stanley, are you afraid to go to war?'

"'Afraid!' he cried angrily, 'Who said I was afraid?' Then his tone changed. 'They don't want me. They won't have me. It's this arm,' and he held his right arm out and looked at it in a disgusted sort of way. 'They claim it's stiff, but I could shoot if they would only give me a chance. I've tried three times to get in, but there's no use worrying Mother about it since I can't go. But my arm is getting better. It's not nearly as stiff as it was. I'll get in yet.' Then he looked at me scornfully and said, 'Afraid! Afraid nothing!'

"I ran as fast as ever I could to find Father and Mother and tell them. Mother hugged me and laughed and cried at the same time and said she always knew it, and Father made me tell over to him three times, word for word, every single thing Stanley had said.

"'He must never know,' Mother said. 'He must never suspect for a minute that we thought he did n't want to go, the poor dear boy, keeping his trouble to himself for

fear of worrying us.' And she told me to get Charlie and catch a couple of chickens to fry for supper. Then I knew she was happy again, for whenever Mother was happy or specially pleased with one of us she always had something extra good to eat.

"Pass the apples, Alice, please, and tomorrow night if you're real good and don't get kept in at school I'll tell you—well, you just be real good and you'll see what I'll tell you about."

EASTER

It was the night before Easter. Grandma had told Bobby and Alice and Pink of the first Easter, and had explained about the egg being the symbol of life because it contains everything necessary for the awakening of new life.

"When I was a little girl," she said, "we had lots of chickens and of course we had lots of eggs. We got so many eggs that we could not use them all—not even if Mother made custards and omelets and angel cake every day.

"Father or the boys would take the eggs we did not need to the store and trade them for sugar or coffee or pepper or rice. But for quite a while before Easter they did not take any eggs to the store.

"It was a custom for the children to hide all the eggs that were laid for a couple of weeks before Easter. Father and Mother had done it when they were little, and all the boys and girls who went to our school did it, too. We would bring them in Easter morning and count them. Each of us might

keep the eggs we found to sell, and Father always gave a fifty-cent piece to the one who had the most eggs. Even the big boys and Aggie and Belle hid eggs, for money was scarce and sometimes the egg money amounted to a good deal. We were allowed to keep all the eggs we found, no matter to whom they belonged and how we hunted.

"We searched in the hen house, the barn, the haymow, in old barrels and boxes, in fence corners, and even in the wood-box behind the kitchen stove. One spring a brown leghorn hen slipped into the kitchen every other day and laid in the wood-box. You never could tell where a hen might lay, so we looked every place we could think of.

"It was an early spring. The trees were bursting into leaf, the grass was green, the beautiful yellow Easter flowers in the front yard were in bloom. Best of all, the hens had never been known to lay so many eggs before.

"It seemed that every one of us wanted something that the egg money would buy. Truman was going away to school, and he wanted books. Belle was going to be

married, and she wanted all the money she could get for pretty clothes. Stanley wanted a new saddle for his courting colt. When the boys turned eighteen, Father gave each one of them a colt to tame and break and have for his own, and they were called the courting colts. I wanted the egg money for a lovely wax doll like one I had seen in a store in Clayville, and if Charlie got it he meant to spend it for a gun. Aggie wanted to buy a pair of long lace mitts to wear to Belle's wedding. So we all hunted and hunted, each one thinking of what he would buy with the money.

"Once for three days I didn't have an egg. Then I found a great basketful that was so heavy I could hardly carry it to a new hiding place, and the next day it was gone. So it went on till Easter.

"Charlie and I were up bright and early on Easter morning—not as early as on Christmas, of course. As we all brought in our eggs Father counted them. The kitchen floor was covered with baskets and buckets and boxes of eggs. You never saw so many eggs. Charlie had the most, and he was as happy as happy could be.

"While Mother and the girls finished getting breakfast, Charlie and I hunted for the colored eggs. Under beds, behind doors, in the cupboards, all over the house we hunted.

"'Here they are!' shouted Charlie from the spare chamber. And there they were behind the bureau—red eggs, blue eggs, green eggs, big sugar eggs, and eggs with pretty pictures pasted on them and tied with gay ribbons. And there were white eggs that looked just like common hen's eggs, but when you broke a tiny bit of the shell and put your tongue to it, my, oh my! but that maple sugar was delicious!

"After breakfast there was a rush to get the work done and get ready for meeting. Dear knows how many people would come home to dinner with us. Mother always asked everyone home to dinner.

"We were nearly ready. Mother had picked the lovely, yellow Easter flowers and was wrapping the stems in wet paper to keep them from wilting till we got to the church—she meant to put them in a vase on the pulpit stand—when Father came in and said that the widow Spear's new house had

burned down in the night. There was something the matter with the chimney, no one knew just what.

"Mr. Abraham Harvey had told Father. The Spear family had taken refuge in a little old house that they had lived in before they built the new house. But of course they had nothing to keep house with, and Mr. Harvey was going around in a big wagon collecting things. There were some pieces of old furniture in the wagon, and several bundles of bedclothes and a box of dishes.

"Father gave flour and meat and potatoes and a ham. Mother emptied the shelves of our Easter pies and took the chicken in the pot right off the stove, besides giving bread and a crock of apple butter.

"Then she wrapped up a pair of blankets she had woven herself and sent Charlie and Truman to carry out some chairs and a bedstead that were up in the meat-house loft. Belle and Aggie were sorting out some old clothes to send, and I wanted to do something, too.

"As I was going through the kitchen on an errand for Mother, I noticed the eggs. Such a lot of them—nearly fifty dozen, and

they brought ten cents a dozen. Just then Charlie passed the door carrying a chair, and I called to him.

"'Charlie,' I said, 'would you give your egg money if I gave mine?'

"'No,' he said at once, 'I won't give my egg money. Not on your life, I won't! Father and Mother'll give enough,' and he went out.

"I didn't say any more about the egg money. I didn't think it would be fair to Charlie, since he was the one who had the most eggs. I went upstairs to Mother's room and took my gold breastpin out of the fat pincushion on her bureau.

"'Here is my breastpin, Mother,' I said. 'Send it to Millie. Everything she'll get will be so plain and ugly.'

"Aggie and Belle laughed.

"'A breastpin,' said Aggie, 'when very likely she has no dress!'

"'It's all right, Sarah,' said Mother, and she went to her bureau drawer and took out a fine linen handkerchief and laid it on the bed beside the breastpin. When she came to get them, Aggie had given a carved back comb and Belle a pretty lace collar.

"Mr. Harvey was starting his horses and Father had come inside the gate when Charlie ran around the house.

"'Give them my egg money, Father!' he called and ran out of sight again. Then all the rest of us said we would give our egg money, too, and it made a lot—over five dollars.

"'I'm proud of you,' Mother said when she had hunted Charlie up and was tying his necktie. 'I'm proud of every one of my children.'

"We were a little late to meeting, and when we got home Belle had dinner ready—ham meat and cream gravy and mashed potatoes and hot biscuits. Mother brought out a plate of fruit cake that she kept in a big stone jar for special occasions—the longer she kept it the better it got—and a dish of pickled peaches for dessert."

"Mm! mm! Wish I'd been there," sighed Bobby.

"And next time," Grandma went on, "I think—yes, I'm pretty sure—that I'll tell you how the maple sugar got in the Easter eggs."

AT A SUGAR CAMP

"Grandma," said Alice the next evening, "you said you'd tell us how the sugar got in the Easter egg."

"And so I will," answered Grandma. "I'll tell you about that this very evening. Where's my knitting? I can talk so much better when I knit. There now, are you all ready?"

Bobby and Alice and Pink drew their stools closer and Grandma began:

"On my father's farm, about half a mile from our house, was a grove of maple trees. We always called them sugar trees. In the spring, you know, the sweet juice or sap comes up from the roots into the trees, and it is from this sap that maple sirup and sugar are made. In the spring Father and the boys would tap our sugar trees. They would take elder branches and make spouts by removing the pithy centers. Then they would bore holes in the trees and put the spouts in the holes and place buckets underneath to catch the sap. These buckets would have to be emptied several times a day

into the big brass kettle, where it was boiled down into sirup and sugar.

"Truman tended to the sap buckets and kept a supply of firewood on hand, and Stanley watched the boiling of the sap. He knew just when it was thick enough and sweet enough to take off for sirup and how much longer to cook it for sugar. One of the girls was always there to help, and Father or Mother would oversee it all.

"There was a one-roomed log cabin with a great fireplace in the maple grove. It had been built years and years before by some early settler and was never occupied except during sugar-making time. The girls would go up the week before and clean it out, and Mother would send dishes and bedclothes for the two rough beds built against the wall. The ones making and tending the sirup would camp up there.

"Mother would send butter and bread and pies, and the girls would boil meat or beans in a black iron pot that hung over the fire. In the evenings they would have lots of fun sitting in front of the fire, telling stories and popping corn. Sister Aggie could make the best popcorn balls that were put

together with maple sirup. They would often have visitors, too, neighboring boys and girls who would come in to stay until bedtime. And there would be songs and games.

"And they would make the sugar eggs for Easter. Before sugar time came we would blow the contents out of eggs by making little holes in each end. Then we would dry the shells and put them away. When they were taking off the maple sugar, Mother or Belle or Aggie would fill the egg shells and set them aside for the sugar to cool and harden. They would fill goose-egg shells with the maple sugar, too, and when the sugar hardened they would pick the shell off, and by and by the girls would paste pretty pictures of birds or flowers on them and tie them with gay-colored ribbons for Easter.

"Neither Charlie nor I had ever been allowed to stay all night at the sugar camp, and when Mother said we could stay one night with Stanley and Truman and Belle we were wild with joy.

"Truman had shot and cleaned three squirrels that morning, and Belle cooked

them in the big black pot with a piece of fat pork until the water boiled off and they sizzled and browned in the bottom of the pot. We had little flat corn cakes baked on the hearth and maple sirup, and, my, but that supper tasted good to me!

"I dried the dishes for Belle, and we had just settled down for the evening when one of the Strang boys came in. He did n't know we children were there, and he had come up to see if Stanley and Truman and Belle would go home with him to a little frolic. His sister Esther had been married a few days before and had come home that afternoon, and they were going to have a serenade for them. Belle and the boys wanted Charlie and me to go down to the house so they could go, but we would n't do it. We declared we were not afraid to stay by ourselves and told them to go on. Finally they did.

"Charlie and I did n't mind being left alone at all. We thought it was great fun. For a while we played we were pioneers. Then Charlie got tired of that and wanted to play Indian, so we played Indian for a long time. But we had been out all day in

the cold, and after a while we got sleepy and decided to go to bed. I went to the window to see if Belle and the boys were coming. There was a moon, and I could see the trees with their spouts and the buckets under them. I looked closely. At one of the buckets was a black shadow. I looked and looked at it and just then it moved a little.

"'Charlie,' I cried excitedly, 'Brierly's old black dog is out there drinking up our sap!'

"Charlie gave one hurried glance out the window, then he picked up a stick of firewood and opened the door.

"'I bet I give that dog a good scare,' he said, and rushed out the door and made straight for the black shadow. He raised the stick and brought it down ker-plunk on the back of what we thought was Brierly's dog. But it was n't Brierly's dog at all, nor anybody's dog. It was a bear! I don't know which was the most surprised, Charlie or the bear. Charlie darted back to the cabin, and when he reached the door he threw his stick with all his might and hit the bear on the nose. The nose is the bear's

tenderest point, you know. Charlie must have hurt him, for he gave a growl, backed away from the sap bucket, and scampered up the nearest tree. Maybe he meant to

Up the tree the bear stayed while Charlie and I watched him

wait a while and come back for more sap, I don't know. Anyway, up the tree he stayed while Charlie and I watched him through the window.

"'If we could only keep him up the tree till the boys come home from Strangs' one of them could get a gun and kill him,' said Charlie, 'and we'd get the money for his pelt.'

"'Father says wolves won't come near a fire,' I remarked, and that gave Charlie an idea. He would build a fire and keep the bear treed until the boys came.

"At first I would n't agree to help him. I was too afraid. But Charlie coaxed and threatened and was getting ready to do it himself. So I helped him carry out the first burning log from the fireplace in the cabin. After that my part was to watch the bear and warn Charlie if he moved while Charlie built up the fire. Once as the fire grew warmer and the smoke got thicker and thicker the bear snorted and moved to a limb higher up.

"Charlie kept a roaring fire going, and it was n't long until Belle and the boys came rushing up all out of breath from running. They were nearly scared to death because they had seen the smoke and thought the cabin was on fire.

"At first they would n't believe we had a bear treed. Truman said, 'Whoever heard of a bear climbing a tree like that?' But Stanley said nobody knew what a bear might do, and Charlie said that there was the bear all right, they could see for themselves.

"Truman went home and got his gun and shot the bear. It turned out to be a young bear. Father sold the pelt and divided the money between Charlie and me.

"Now, let me see, what shall I tell you about tomorrow night? Oh, I know! I 've thought of something, but I won't tell. No, indeed, not a word till tomorrow night."

THE NEW CHURCH ORGAN

Grandma had been to church Sunday morning and heard for the first time the wonderful new pipe organ, and in the evening she was talking about it—how beautiful the music was, how solemn, how sacred.

"And when I think," she said, "of the opposition there was to the first little organ we had in our church and of the trouble we had getting it—well, well, times certainly have changed.

"It was like this. Some of our people were bitterly opposed to organ music in church and right up till the last minute did everything they could to keep us from getting an organ. This made it very hard to raise money for the organ, but after a long time we got enough—all but about forty dollars. It was decided to have a box social to raise this.

"At a box social each girl or woman took a box containing enough supper for two people. Then the boxes were auctioned

off, and the men and boys bought them and ate supper with the girl whose box they got.

"Aggie and Belle trimmed their boxes with colored tissue paper and flowers and ribbon, but Mother just wrapped hers in plain white tissue paper and fastened a bunch of pinks out of the garden on top so Father would know it when it was put up to be sold. Father was going to buy Mother's box, and I was going to eat with them. Charlie had money to buy a box for himself, and he said he meant to buy Aunt Livvy Orbison's box because she always had so much to eat.

"Every one in the family was going, and there was a great rush and bustle to get ready. Mother cut Charlie's hair and oiled it and curled mine. She scrubbed us till we shone, and at last, dressed in our best clothes, we started.

"Father and Mother and Belle and Aggie and I went in the surrey. All the boys walked over the hill, except Joe, who had gone to Clayville on business for Father that morning and was to stop at the church on his way home.

"It was a lovely warm evening, and there was a large crowd at the church when we got there, though it was early. The girls took their boxes in and then came right out again. Every one was having a splendid time, talking and laughing and visiting around.

"I was with Father. After a while I got tired hearing the men talk about the crops and the price of wool and the election, and I went to hunt Mother. I looked all around and I could n't find her. I thought maybe she had gone into the church, so I went in there to look for her, but there was no one in the church at all. The boxes had been piled on the pulpit and covered with a sheet so that no one could see them. Just as I was going out the door I noticed that the sheet was lying on the floor and the boxes were nowhere to be seen. I went on out and presently I found sister Belle. She was talking to John and Isabel Strang and Will Orbison.

"I tugged at Belle's dress and pulled her to one side.

"'What did they do with the boxes?' I asked her.

"'Why, they put them in the church, and after a while they will sell them,' she said. 'You run and find Mother now, like a good girl.'

"'But the boxes are n't on the pulpit,' I whispered. 'I was in the church hunting Mother, and the boxes are all gone and the sheet is lying on the floor.'

"Belle told the others, and they all went hurrying into the church, I following after. The boxes were gone, sure enough. The pulpit windows, which faced a strip of woods, were open. The boys said the boxes could have been taken out that way as the crowd was in front of the church. There was no place in the church to hide them. There was a loft, but it was entered through a hole in the ceiling and there was no ladder. Belle placed two chairs with their seats touching and covered them with the sheet so that no one could tell the boxes were not there.

"'It looks as if some of the people who don't want the organ have spoiled this box supper,' said John Strang, 'and they will keep us from having our organ for a while, too.'

"'But that is n't the worst of it,' put in Isabel. 'It'll cause no end of trouble and hard feelings.'

"'It may have been some of the boys who did it for a joke,' said Belle. 'Let us raise the money anyway and get ahead of them.'

"'But how,' Isabel asked anxiously, 'with no boxes?'

"Then they thought out their plan. It was that John and Will were to go out and explain quietly to the boys in favor of the organ what had happened and get them to give the money they meant to spend on their boxes to John. Brother Joe had bought a new pair of shoes in town. They would put his shoe box up for sale just as if all the rest of the boxes were still under the sheet. Will was to bid against John and run the box up to the amount they had collected.

"Isabel stayed in the church to see that no one disturbed the sheet, and John and Will and Belle went outside to carry out their plan. I found Mother, and pretty soon we went into the church. The lamps had been lit, and I thought how nice it looked. The girls had come up the day before and

swept the floor and dusted the benches and shined the tin reflectors on the lamps, and put great bunches of flowers and ferns over the doors and windows and covered the two big round stoves with boughs of evergreen. There was a short program first, and then Stanley, who was to auction off the boxes, stepped to the front of the pulpit and held up a plain white box tied with stout string.

"'How much am I offered for this box?' he said.

"The bidding started at twenty-five cents. At first there were lots of bids, but finally every one dropped out but John and Will. There was n't a sound in the church as the bidding went higher and higher—thirty dollars for that plain, white box, thirty-five dollars, forty dollars, forty-one dollars. Will stopped bidding and the box went to John for forty-one dollars.

"Some one called out, 'Open the box!' and that started things. 'Open the box!' they shouted. 'Open it!' 'Let's see what's in it!' 'Open, open, open!'

"When they quieted down a little, Stanley explained about the boxes disappearing and

everything. Then he untied the string, took the lid off the box, and held up a pair of

Stanley held up a pair of men's shoes

men's shoes number ten. Then that crowd went wild. They clapped and shouted and yelled. Stanley said he thought the boxes had been taken for a joke and suggested that they be returned.

"'We have enough money for the organ,' he said. 'Now let us have our suppers and some fun.'

"One of the boys on the side opposing the organ got up and said that the boxes had been taken for a joke and would immediately

be returned. And you could n't guess where those boxes were hidden! Right in the big round stoves there in the church! Of course everybody laughed again and laughed and laughed. Such a good-humored crowd you never saw.

"They handed out the boxes first to the people who had paid in their money, and sold the others. There were n't enough boxes to go around, but each had plenty in it for three or four people. Every one divided, and there was not a person in the church who did not get something to eat. People who had been in favor of the organ ate out of the same boxes with those who had been against it and forgot that they had ever disagreed. And when the organ came and sister Aggie played it that first Sunday, why, it sounded sweeter to me than that beautiful big organ in your church did this morning.

"And now, 'night, 'night,' everybody, and next time I think — yes. I 'm pretty pretty sure — next time we'll have something about my school."

SCHOOL DAYS

"All my brothers and sisters had liked to go to school," Grandma began the next evening, "and in the sitting room, after supper, Father would hear their lessons while Mother knitted or sewed or darned. Father had read books and papers aloud to us as long as I could remember, and he always told us how important education was. So as soon as I got to be six years old I was anxious to start to school.

"I was small for my age, and as we lived two miles from the schoolhouse and the snow in winter was often two or three feet deep, Mother did not want me to go until I was seven or eight years old. She said she and Father could teach me at home for a couple of years yet, but I coaxed and coaxed to go. At last Mother said I could go as long as the weather was good.

"So on the very first day—it was along toward the last of October—I started down the road with a brand new primer under my arm and a lunch basket of my very own and shiny new shoes. Mother stood at the

front gate to watch me out of sight and wave when I came to the turn in the road.

"Our schoolhouse was n't like yours. It was just a little frame building painted red. There were no globes or books or maps or pictures to make learning interesting. Just rough, scarred benches, a water bucket and a dipper on a shelf in one corner, and a big round stove in the center of the room, and of course the teacher's desk and chair on the platform up in front.

"The teacher was usually a man, but that winter it was a woman—Miss Amma Morton. Miss Amma was a tall, bony woman with snapping, black eyes that saw everything, and thin gray hair combed straight back from her face. She wore a brown alpaca dress with a very full gathered skirt and black and white calico aprons and a little black shoulder shawl fastened with a gold brooch.

"She lived with a married sister who had a very large family. In those days all the stockings and socks were knitted at home, and Miss Amma did the knitting for her sister's family. She did it in school. She would sit at the stove or at her desk and

knit and knit on long gray stockings or on red mittens. She would knit all day while she heard our lessons. The only time

Miss Amma would knit all day while she heard our lessons

she could n't knit was when she set our copies. We had no copy books, and the teacher had to write the copies out for us.

"I liked to go to school. It was fun to peep into my lunch basket at recess to see what Mother had put in and maybe slip out a piece of pie or cake to eat. I liked to make playhouses on the big flat rocks with Annie Brierly and the other little girls, and hunt soft, green moss to furnish them with,

and smooth pebbles down at the run. I loved to learn my A B C's and listen to the older children recite, and at noon and recess to play 'Prisoners' Base' and 'Copenhagen.' But school was n't always so pleasant.

"One day not long after I started there was a heavy wind and rain storm. We could n't recite our lessons, the rain made so much noise on the roof. Through the windows we could see the trees swaying this way and that in the wind.

"At afternoon recess Annie and I ran out to see if our playhouses had been spoiled by the rain. When we came back the girls were standing around in little excited groups. They told us that the roof had blown off Bowser's house—they lived about half a mile down the road—and that most of the boys had gone to see it.

"'Did Charlie go?' I asked eagerly.

"'I reckon he did,' one of the girls answered. 'He was with the other boys and they went that way. I would n't be in their boots for anything. They won't be back before books, and Teacher 'll whip them if they're late.'

"I drew Annie away. 'I'm going after Charlie,' I told her. 'I'm going to take the

short cut across the hill and catch up to him and bring him back.'

"Annie said she would go with me, and we started. The ground was wet and it was hard walking. We slipped at every step. After I thought about it a little, I was not at all sure that Charlie would thank me for coming. Maybe he'd sooner take a whipping than miss seeing a house without a roof. Boys are so different from girls that way.

"We got clear to Bowser's without seeing a sign of a single boy, and the roof was n't off at all—just a little corner of it. Mr. Bowser was nailing it up as fast as ever he could. He said none of the boys had been there, so we started back.

"That was the longest walk I ever took. I thought we'd never get to the schoolhouse. My feet were wet and my legs ached and I was so tired I could hardly move. When we got to the top of the hill and looked down at the schoolhouse, there was no one in sight. Recess was over! We reached the door at last and stood trembling outside, afraid to open it and go in and afraid not to. Annie had been

to school the winter before and was not so scared as I was. She took my hand reassuringly.

"'Don't let on you're frightened,' she whispered. 'Maybe Miss Amma has n't missed us and we can slip into our seats without being seen.'

"Annie opened the door just as easy, and we slid in without a sound. But alas! alas! Miss Amma was hearing the advanced arithmetic class and she stood facing the door, so the second we stepped in she saw us.

"She stopped explaining a problem long enough to order Annie and me to stand in opposite corners up on the platform where everybody could see us.

"No one had had to stand in the corner since I had started to school, so instead of facing the corner as I should have done I stood with my face toward the school. I looked to see if Charlie was in his place. When he saw me looking at him, he began making motions. I thought he meant for me to stand tight in the corner, so I pushed as close as I could to the wall. All over the room pupils were smiling at me and pointing and shaking their heads. I wondered what

they meant. I looked across at Annie. She was laughing and she made a motion, too. Then I thought of what she had said—not to let on I was frightened. Maybe I looked scared. I looked at Annie again. She stuck her head into the corner, looked at me, frowned, put her head in the corner again. What did she mean? It was too funny the way they were all acting. Then I laughed, too, right out loud, before I knew it. I laughed and laughed. I could n't stop.

"Teacher gave me a long, severe look.

"'Turn around and face the corner, Sarah,' she said, 'and you may remain after school.'

"Then I knew what Charlie and Annie and the others had been trying to tell me. I stood there in the corner until the scholars had all gone home and Miss Amma had swept the floor and cleaned the blackboard and emptied the water bucket.

"Finally she called me, and I went over to her desk. When she asked me why I had run off at recess and then disturbed the whole school by laughing, I told her all about it, and she said she would forgive me that time and helped me on with my cape and hood.

"Charlie was waiting for me down the road a piece. He had n't even thought of going to see Bowser's house, but had been down in the meadow watching the big boys dig out a woodchuck.

"And, now, an apple all around and good night."

A BIRTHDAY PARTY

"Mm! Is n't it beautiful?" exclaimed Grandma as she stood with Bobby and Alice and Pink admiring the table decorated for Pink's birthday party. Everything was pink and white. The lovely white-frosted cake had pink candles in pink rose-holders — seven, one for each year and one to grow on. There were pink candies and pink flowers and pink caps for the little girls and boys to wear.

"'And the ice cream is to be pink,' Alice explained, 'pink ice cream shaped like animals — dogs and bunnies and kittens.'

"My, but is n't that fine!" said Grandma. "Now my first party was n't a bit like this. Maybe tonight if you are not too tired I 'll tell you about my party."

And that night after they had told Grandma about Pink's party she told them about hers.

"We did n't have many parties when I was little," Grandma began, "and we never had regular little girls' parties. Everyone, big and little, came, and they were generally surprise parties and the guests would bring the refreshments with them. One evening

going home from school, the girls were wishing that some one would get up a surprise party, when suddenly Annie Brierly said, "'Why don't we get up a party for Sarah, girls? Friday is her birthday. Do you think your Mother would care, Sarah?'

"'We'd both help her,' Callie Orbison put in before I could answer. 'You don't need to do much getting ready for a surprise party. We could have it Friday night, and Saturday we'd both come over and help clean up the house.'

"'Not a soul but Callie and me would know you knew anything about it,' urged Annie, 'and we could have just loads of fun.'

"I promised to think about it, and the more I thought about it the better I liked the idea of having a party of my very own. It did n't take much persuasion the next day to make me consent. Annie and Callie were delighted and immediately fell to making plans, but they agreed that nothing should be said to Mother until Thursday evening, the date set for the party being Friday night.

"The days that followed were full of mingled pleasure and pain for me. I was happy at the idea of having a real party, but it did n't

seem fair to deceive Mother. Once I thought of telling her all about it just as I told her about everything else. But I was afraid she would say I was too young to have a party, and I had never been to a party in my life. Sister Aggie was visiting Aunt Louisa in Clayville, and Mother had no one to help her except for what I could do mornings and evenings. But I would be at home all day Saturday, and Annie and Callie had said that they would help.

"Thursday morning Annie told me that she had baked a cake and put my initials on top in little red candies, and Callie said her mother was going to bake an election cake with spices and raisins in it. All day Thursday I kept thinking about the party. It was n't off my mind a minute. I could n't study for thinking about it, and I missed a word in spelling—the first word I'd missed that term—and had to go to the foot of the class.

"But by the time we had started home I had made up my mind to one thing, that if I could not have a party with everything open and above board I did not want one at all. And so I told the girls that I had changed my

mind and did not want them to have a surprise party for me. They coaxed and argued and teased, but I was firm. I was sorry that Annie had baked a cake and I hated to disappoint them, but I did not want a party. The girls were cross with me, and I felt miserable when Annie turned in her gate without saying good-by.

"Aggie had come home from Clayville that afternoon, and she was so busy telling Mother the news and describing the latest fashions, and showing the things she had bought, that no one noticed me much. Not a word was said all evening about my birthday being so near. Even Charlie did n't tease me about what he would do, such as ducking me in the rain barrel, as he always did, and I thought everyone had forgotten all about my birthday.

"But Friday morning just before I started to school Aggie gave me a plain little handkerchief that she had hemstitched before she went away, and then I knew for sure that she had not brought me anything from Clayville. And when Mother gave me a pair of common home-knit stockings, I thought I should cry right out before everybody instead of waiting until I got started to school.

"Annie and Callie were in a good humor again and as pleasant as could be, but I felt so unhappy that day that I did n't notice that the girls at school seemed unusually happy and excited. When I finally did notice it, I was afraid that Annie and Callie had gone ahead with plans for the party. I accused them of this, but they denied it.

" 'No, no, we did n't do another thing about the party,' they declared. But they looked at each other and laughed when they said it, and I did n't believe them.

" 'You did,' I said, 'you know you did.'

" 'Cross my heart and hope to die if we did,' Callie insisted.

" 'Here's some of the cake that I baked for your party that we did n't have,' said Annie. 'Now will you believe us? I brought you girls each a piece, but it was a sin to cut that cake—it was such a beautiful cake.' And she handed us each a slice of delicious, yellow sponge cake decorated with red candies.

"Mother had given me an errand to do at the store on my way home, so it was later than usual when, hungry and tired, I opened the kitchen door. Mother met me and took my bundles and books.

Out from the hall rushed Annie and Callie and seven other little girls

" 'Take your wraps off here, Sarah,' she said. 'Aggie has company in the sitting room.' I didn't hear anyone talking, but I took off my coat. Then Aggie called me and I went into the sitting room, but I stopped in amazement just inside the door.

"In the center of the room was a table set with Mother's best linen and china and silver, and while I gazed at it, out from the hall rushed Annie and Callie and seven other little girls all near my own age dressed up in their Sunday frocks and each one thrusting some sort of package toward me.

"I could n't say a word — I just burst into tears. I went upstairs with Mother to wash my face and put on my best dress. She told me Aggie had written invitations on cards she had bought in Clayville, and Charlie had carried them to the girls that morning. Then I told Mother all about the party we had planned to have, and she said not to think any more about it but that she was glad I had told her.

"We played games — 'Pussy wants a corner' and 'Button, button, who's got the button' and 'Hide the thimble' — and asked riddles and had a good time.

"Then we had supper. There were cold roast chicken, tiny hot biscuits and peach preserves, three kinds of cake, and hot chocolate that Aggie had learned to make in Clayville and none of us had ever tasted before.

"Mother and Aggie had given me those presents in the morning just to fool me. Aggie had brought me a lovely story book, and Mother had a string of pretty pink beads for me. Charlie gave me a little basket he had whittled out of a peach seed, and from Father I got a silver dollar.

"And now good night, pleasant dreams."

THE LOCUSTS

"Grandma," said Bobby one evening, "did you ever see a locust—a seventeen-year locust? And why are they called seventeen-year locusts?"

"Oh, yes, I've seen locusts and heard them, too," answered Grandma, taking up her knitting. "They are called seventeen-year locusts because they come every seventeen years. They lay their eggs in a tree. These eggs hatch tiny worms, called larvae, which fall to the ground and stay there for seventeen years changing slowly until they have turned into locusts. They live only about thirty days, but they often do a great deal of damage in this time. One year when I was a little girl all our fruit was eaten by the locusts and many of the trees were killed. They ate the garden stuff, the potato tops, and even the flowers, so it must have been somewhat as it was in Pharaoh's time.

"You remember Pharaoh was the king of Egypt who refused to let the children of Israel go. For this God sent the plagues on Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. One of these

plagues was the locusts. God caused a strong east wind to blow all day and all night, and this wind brought the locusts. They were every place — all over the ground, in Pharaoh's house, and in the houses of his people. They ate all the vegetables and fruits, even the leaves on the trees, so there was nothing green left in all the land. The noise they made must have been awful. When Pharaoh repented, the Lord sent a strong west wind which blew the locusts away, and they were drowned in the Red Sea. Ever since that time people have thought the locusts say 'Pharaoh.'

"I believe I'll tell you tonight about the first time I ever heard a locust. Mother wondered one day at dinner whether there were any blackberries ripe yet. She said she wished she had enough for a few pies. So that afternoon I took a pail and started for the blackberry field. I did n't tell anyone where I was going, for I wanted to surprise Mother. I was afraid that if she knew she might n't let me go alone, for she was timid about snakes. Sure enough, I saw a snake nearly the first thing, but it was a harmless little garter snake and scuttled away into the bushes as soon as it heard me.

"There were lots and lots of red berries, but only a few ripe ones here and there. I wandered on and on, thinking every minute I should come to a patch of ripe berries where I could fill my pail in a few minutes. It was n't much fun blackberrying all by myself. I scratched my hands and face and tore my dress on the briars and wished many times that I was back home, but I kept on picking until my pail was full.

"I did not realize how far I had gone nor how long I had been out until I noticed that the sun was going down. Then I started to hurry home as fast as I could. But I was tired and my bucket grew heavier with every step, so I often sat down to rest. I rested a long time under a chestnut tree, and then after I had walked miles, it seemed to me, I found myself back under this same tree. I knew it was the same tree because Charlie had cut my initials on it the summer before. I had been going around in a circle! I started out again. I looked to the right and to the left and straight ahead, but I could n't find the path.

"I was lost—lost in that great blackberry patch over a mile from home. Night was

coming on, and no one knew where I had gone. I wondered where I should sleep if no one found me before it got dark, and what I should eat. Of course I could climb a tree, but I might go to sleep and fall out of it. I should n't starve, for I could eat blackberries, but the very thought of eating any more blackberries made me feel sick.

"I hurried this way and that, trying to find my way out and growing more frightened every minute.

"Then suddenly I heard some one calling to me.

" 'Sa—rah! Sa—rah!' I heard as plain as plain could be, and I answered them. I screamed at the top of my voice, 'Here I am! Here I am!' But the voices—there seemed to be a great many of them—only kept on saying over and over again, 'Sa—rah! Sa—rah!'

"I ran, stumbling and falling through the bushes, still holding to my precious pail of berries, but I did n't seem to get any nearer to the folks who were calling me. All the neighbors must be out helping hunt for me, I thought to myself. That was queer, too, for it was n't really dark and Mother was

used to having me play for hours at a time down by the run or on the hill under the oak trees.

"Presently I came to an open space. There was a group of trees at the far edge, and there under those trees, to my great surprise, stood Mother's little Jersey cow. I ran toward her, and when she saw me she gave a weak 'moo.' But when she tried to move I saw that she was caught fast by the horns in a wild grapevine that grew around the tree. I tried to free her, but I could n't. The wild grapevine is very tough and strong, and Jersey was securely fastened by it. I petted her and talked to her and forgot to be afraid any more. Then I happened to think that if she had been there very long she must be thirsty. She was not giving any milk and had been turned out to graze in the pasture field that joined the berry patch and had probably come through a bad place in the fence. I remembered having passed a spring a little way back, and I emptied my berries carefully in a pile on the ground and ran back and filled my bucket with water. But I could n't reach Jersey's mouth, and though she tried frantically to get at the water she could n't get her head

down to it. I dragged two pieces of old log over and built up a platform. Then I climbed up on it with my bucket of water, and my, how glad Jersey was to get that cool drink!

"Then I sat down on a log to wait for some one to come. To keep from getting lonely I began to say over my memory verses for the next Sunday. I was committing the Twenty-third Psalm and I had just reached the line beginning, 'He restoreth my soul,' when I heard them calling again.

" 'Sa—rah! Sa—rah!' they said just as before. I jumped up and cried out as loud as I could, 'Here I am! Here I am!' I was determined to make them hear me this time, and I said it over and over until I was hoarse, and the more I answered the louder the voices seemed to call.

"Then to my joy came a voice I knew. 'Where are you and what are you doing here?' it said, and crashing through the bushes came my big brother Stanley. I rushed crying into his arms, and the funny part was that Stanley did not know I was lost. He was on his way home from work on the upper place and had come down to see if the berries were

How glad Jersey was to get that cool drink!

ripe so he could tell Mother. He had heard me calling and had come to find me.

"With his pocket knife he cut the vines that held Jersey, and we drove her slowly back to the pasture field after he had helped me pick up the berries.

"When Stanley and I got home Mother was just starting Charlie out to look for me. She was pleased to get the berries and glad I had found Jersey. Father said Jersey might have starved before he would have missed her, but Mother made a rule that I was never again to go farther away than the oak trees or the run without asking her.

" 'Who was calling me?' I asked. 'Some one was calling me. They still are. Listen!' and there it was again.

" 'Sa—rah! Sa—rah!'

"They all looked puzzled. Then Mother laughed.

"'Oh,' she said, 'I know what she means. Why, that is n't anyone calling you, dear. That's the locusts and they say, 'Pha—raoh! Pha—raoh!' But it does sound like 'Sa—rah,' does n't it? And I am very glad you thought they said 'Sa—rah' and answered them or Stanley would n't have

found you and you might have been up in the berry patch all night.'

"There, that was a long story, was n't it? Hurry to bed now, for you know,

"Early to bed and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

ONE FOURTH OF JULY

Grandma had promised the children a Fourth of July story, and Bobby and Alice and Pink drew up their stools and waited eagerly for her to begin.

"Father was going to take us to Clayville to the Fourth of July celebration," Grandma began. "We were all going except Mother and Nanny Dodds, who was helping us over hay harvest. I had been to Clayville once before.

"'But that time it was on just a common every-day day,' as I told Nanny. 'This will be different.'

"We were to start early—early in the morning—for Clayville was twelve miles away and we did not want to miss a single thing.

"First there would be a parade with two brass bands, then 'speaking' on the court-house steps, and after that an ox roast. In the afternoon there were to be horse races and games. Father promised that we should have supper at the hotel and stay for the fireworks in the evening. I had never seen

even a firecracker, and I looked forward to seeing the skyrockets most of all.

"I was to wear a new light calico dress with a little blue flower in it and a blue sash and my ruffled white sunbonnet that was kept for Sundays. I talked so much about going that Mother and my sisters and every one else except Nanny grew dreadfully tired listening to me and begged me to talk of something else.

"Nanny was twenty and bashful and as homely as could be, but I loved her very much. When she made cookies she put a raisin in the center of some of them, and others she sprinkled with sugar. And she made gingerbread men with current eyes and baked saucer pies and let me scrape the cake bowl. She sewed for my doll and bound up my hurt fingers tenderly and told the nicest stories. There was no end to the things Nanny did for me, but I liked the stories best of all.

"The day before the Fourth, when I sat on the edge of the kitchen table watching Nanny beat eggs for the sponge cake and talking about what I should see the next day, Nanny said in a wistful voice, 'I've

never been to Clayville. I always thought I'd like to go, but I never had a chance.'

"I've never been to Clayville," said Nanny, wistfully

"This set me thinking. Soon I slid off the table and went in search of Mother. I found her at the spring-house churning.

"'Mother,' I said, 'let's take Nanny with us tomorrow.'

"'I'm afraid there is n't room,' Mother answered regretfully. 'There are already five of you, and the surrey is old and not strong.'

"'Nanny does n't weigh much,' I argued.

"'I know, dear, but Father is afraid to load the surrey any heavier for fear you'd

break down and not get to town at all. I have told Nanny she may go home to see her mother tomorrow.'

"All the rest of the morning I sat under the apple tree in the side yard, thinking. Once when Charlie came through the yard with a jug to fill with water for the men in the hayfield I called him over. Maybe he might offer to let Nanny go in his place. To be sure, I had n't much hope of this, but still it was worth trying.

"'Charlie,' I said, 'I think Nanny would like to go to the Fourth of July celebration.'

"'Sure, who would n't?' he replied easily. 'I want to go myself,' and he went on to the well.

"I tried sister Belle next. I found her picking chickens in the orchard and offered to help. Then presently I suggested to her that she could go to Clayville with the Strangs', since their surrey would not be crowded as ours would, and then Nanny could go with us. She only laughed scornfully and made me finish picking the chicken I had started.

"I went sadly back to the apple tree.

"'Nanny wants to go,' I thought to myself, 'and I want to go, too, but if I stay

at home Nanny could go in my place. It would be a sacrifice,' I sighed deeply. 'Preacher Hill says a sacrifice is giving up something you want yourself. I want to go more than I ever wanted anything, but I have lots of things Nanny does n't have. I have curly hair and Nanny's hair is straight. I can read and Nanny can't. I've seen the train and had my dinner at a hotel. I've traveled and Nanny's never been farther from home than Mt. Zion Church.'

"That night after I had said my prayers I put my arms around my Mother's neck and whispered, "'Mother, I want Nanny to go in my place tomorrow.'

"'Why, dear!' Mother started to protest. But after looking earnestly into my face she said, 'Do you really want to stay at home and let Nanny go in your place? You must be very, very sure, you know.'

"'I'm sure, Mother,' I declared solemnly. 'Yes, I'm sure I want her to go.'

"'Well, sleep on it, and if you feel the same in the morning you shall stay with Mother and Nanny may go.'

"I wakened at daylight to find Mother standing beside my bed.

"'Are you awake, Sarah?' she asked. 'They are all up but you.'

"I sat up in bed dazed. I could hear the girls rushing around in their room. From the kitchen came the rattle of dishes and out in the barn the boys were whistling. Suddenly I remembered. It was the Fourth of July!

"'I have n't changed my mind, Mother,' I said yawning sleepily.

"Mother bent down and kissed me before going to tell Nanny. At first Nanny would not hear of it and left off getting breakfast to come and tell me so. I pretended to be too sleepy to talk, so Nanny, urged by Mother, finally went away to get ready, and Mother went down to finish getting the breakfast.

"But I was n't a bit sleepy a little later when I jumped out of bed to watch them start.

"Father and Aggie sat on the front seat of the surrey, and Belle, Nanny, and Charlie on the back seat, while Joe, Stanley, and Truman rode horseback. They all looked very fine and grand to me dressed in their best clothes, and I choked back a sob as they drove down the road and out of sight.

"All morning I helped Mother. I did lots of things the girls would n't let me do when they were doing the work. I dried the dishes and fed the chickens and dusted the sitting room and scrubbed the walks.

"Then Mother and I had our lunch out under the apple tree in the side yard—some of everything the girls had put in their lunch basket—fried chicken and sponge cake and green-apple pie. My, but it tasted good! In the afternoon Mother made my doll a new dress, and we went together to hunt the little turkeys and get the cows.

"It was awfully late when the folks got back, but I sat up in bed to see them. Every one of them had brought me something. Spread out on the bed were a flag and a bag of peanuts, a pewter tea set from Father, a sticky popcorn ball, and a sack of peppermint lozenges, but the nicest of all was when Nanny gave me a hug and whispered, 'I had the grandest time of my life, Sarah, and I reckon it'll take me a month to tell you about all the things I saw.'

"Now, let me think! What in the world will I tell you about tomorrow night? Oh, I know, but I won't tell."

THE BEE TREE

There had been honey for supper, and afterward, before the cozy fire in her room, Grandma was telling Bobby and Alice and Pink about how the bees live in little wooden houses called hives and make the honey from a fluid taken from the heart of the flowers.

"But I knew of some bees once that did not live in a hive but in a hollow tree." Grandma reached for her work basket and drew out her knitting. "While I put the thumb in Bobby's mitten I'll tell you about those bees."

"When I was a little girl," she began, "not many people kept bees and we could not buy honey at the store, so honey was considered a great treat. The first beehive I ever saw belonged to Mr. Brierly. The Brierly's lived on the next farm to us, but between them and us, in a little house on Mr. Brierly's place, lived a family named Henlen. They were very lazy and hunted and fished and worked just enough to get what money they must have. Mr. Brierly

had given them a swarm of bees and helped them make a hive for it, and the Brierlys

Early in the summer one of Mr. Brierly's hives swarmed

and the Henlens were the only people in our neighborhood who kept bees.

"Then early in the summer one of Mr. Brierly's hives swarmed. That is, a swarm of bees left the old hive and wanted to set up in a hive of its own. Usually when a young swarm left the old hive Mr. Brierly gave them a new hive and they settled down contentedly and went to making honey. But this swarm flew away and lighted in a hollow tree on the edge of our woods.

"Mr. Brierly did not find them for several days. Then he told Father he would just leave them where they were, if Father did not care, and when he took the honey he would divide with us. Father told him he was welcome to leave the bees as long as he wanted to and to keep the honey. But Mr. Brierly said Father must take half of the honey or he would not leave the bees. So Father agreed and Mr. Brierly left the bees.

"Every morning when Charlie and I took the cows to pasture we would skip across the field to take a long look at the bee tree. We would watch the bees as they flew in and out the hole in the side of the tree and wondered how much honey they had made and talked about how good it would taste on hot biscuits.

"So all summer the bees worked away, and one day in the fall Mr. Brierly sent Father word that he would be over that week to take the honey. A few mornings later when I came in sight of the bee tree I stopped in amazement. The bee tree was gone! Instead of standing straight and tall like a soldier on guard, it lay flat on the ground.

Chips of wood were scattered all around. The bee tree had been cut down.

"I started for home as fast as I could go to tell Father. He was n't at the barn, and I went to the house. Back of the house, under a sugar tree, the girls were washing and Charlie was carrying water for them. As I came up Aggie was scolding because one of the washtubs was missing. When I told them about the bee tree they were as excited as I was. Charlie ran to the wheat field where Father was ploughing to tell him, and we girls went in to find Mother.

"Belle declared that whoever stole the honey must have taken the tub to carry it away in. And since the honey was on our land and we knew it was ready to take away and the tub was ours, it would look to Mr. Brierly as if we had had something to do with it. Aggie laughed at her and said, 'The very idea of anyone thinking we would steal!' But Mother looked serious.

"Father came right to the house, got on a horse, and rode over to Mr. Brierly's. Mr. Brierly came back with him, and they examined the fallen bee tree carefully. It had been chopped down. Mr. Brierly said

he thought we would have heard the blows down at the house. Father replied coldly that we had heard nothing and knew nothing about it until I had taken the cows to pasture, and would n't have known then if I had not run across to look at the bees. He told him about our tub being gone, too. Aggie said it was n't at all necessary to tell that, but Belle said Father was too honest to keep anything back.

"Father imagined that Mr. Brierly thought we knew something about the disappearance of the honey. Of course Father resented this, so the Brierlys and we ceased to be friendly. Mrs. Brierly and Mother had always helped each other to quilt and make apple butter and had exchanged recipes and loaned patterns back and forth, but all this stopped now.

"School started, and Tom and Annie Brierly did not wait for Charlie and me as they had always done. If they had not gone to school before we came along, they waited until we had passed by before they started.

"Charlie and I worried a great deal about the coldness between the two families and

the unhappiness it was causing. We were always making plans to discover who took the honey and so clear things up.

"One day when Charlie was eating his dinner at school he noticed that Flora May Henlen had something on her bread that looked like honey. He told me to watch her, and the next day at noon I took my dinner and sat down near Flora May to eat it. Sure enough, it was honey she had on her bread. But then I remembered that they had bees and she had a right to have honey. Still I watched Flora May for several days, and she always had honey on her bread.

"'Did your bees make lots of honey this year, Flora May?' I asked her one day.

"'Oh, yes,' she answered, 'every few days the boys bring in a pan of honey.'

"That evening Charlie made an excuse to stop a while with one of the Henlen boys, and in the orchard back of the house he saw their bee hive lying on the ground among some rubbish and rotting leaves.

"We told our discovery at home, and my brother Truman said the Henlens had had no bees at all for months. They had been starved or frozen out the winter before.

"The next morning Father stopped Asa and Longford Henlen as they were passing our house on the way home from mill and told them he knew they had taken the honey. At first they denied all knowledge of the honey, but when they found that in some way Father had found out about it they were scared and admitted that they had chopped down the tree and, finding more honey than they had expected, had taken our tub to carry it away in.

"Mr. Brierly and Father decided that if the boys would work out the pay for the honey and promise not to steal any more they would not tell anyone.

"Mr. Brierly apologized to Father, and Mrs. Brierly and Mother kissed the next time they met, and Tom and Annie began waiting for Charlie and me again, so that everything was all right once more.

"Get the apples, Bobby, please, and tomorrow night, if you say your prayers and go right to sleep tonight, I'll tell you about—well, it's an awfully good story I have for tomorrow night."

BRAIN AGAINST BRAWN

Bobby was feeling his muscle and telling his sisters how strong he wanted to be, and Grandma, hearing him, said, "Of course it's nice to be strong, Bobby, but strength won't get anyone very far unless it is combined with brains. I knew a delicate looking boy once who got ahead of half a dozen big strong fellows, not because he was strong, but because he had brains and used them.

"It was long, long ago—the winter my brother Truman taught our home school. Mother did n't want Truman to take the school, for, though he was eighteen years old, he was a slender, little fellow and his blue eyes and light hair made him look even younger than he really was. But Father said for him to go ahead and see what he could do.

"There were several bad boys in school. The year before they had run the teacher out before the term was half over, and we had no more school that winter. When they heard that Truman was going to teach,

they made all sorts of boasts about what they meant to do.

"Truman got along all right the first few weeks until the older boys, who had been working at a sawmill, started in. Nearly all of these boys were bigger than Truman, and Bud McGill, the leader, was a year older. He had broken up several schools and bragged that he would run Truman out in short order.

"From the day he started he did everything he could to make trouble. Because he had started to school late in the term he did not get the seat he wanted. One morning he came early and took this seat and refused to give it up when Truman asked him to. Truman could n't force him to give it up, because Bud was so much larger and stronger. All day long Bud sat there in the corner seat talking and laughing and throwing paper wads at girls—disturbing all the rest of us so we could not study. At dismissing time Truman told him to take his books with him and not come back to school until he could behave himself, but Bud walked out as bold as you please without a single book.

"I don't know just how it would have come out if Bud's father had not heard about the trouble. But he did, and he told Bud he would have to give up the seat unless he got the teacher's permission to keep it.

"Bud said he'd get Truman's permission all right.

"The next morning I went to school early with Truman because Charlie was sick and could n't go. As soon as we came in sight of the schoolhouse and saw a thick column of smoke rising from the chimney we knew something had happened, for Truman always built the fire himself.

"When we got within hearing distance, Bud McGill opened the door a tiny bit and called out to Truman, 'Have I your say-so to keep the seat in the corner?'

"'No, you have n't,' Truman said shortly, and Bud slammed the door in his face and bolted it. Bud's plan was to keep Truman out of the schoolhouse until he agreed to Bud's taking the seat he wanted. Then Truman could come in and take up books as usual, but if he did this he would be admitting that Bud was the real authority in

the school and the other pupils would cease to respect him.

"As the children came to school Bud opened the door and let them in. They offered to let me in, too, but I would n't go. Truman wanted me to go back home, but I would n't do that either. Several of the boys stopped to talk to Truman and offered to help him. Bud's crowd saw the boys talking to Truman and thought they were going to combine and try to enter the schoolhouse by force. Bud dared them to come ahead. He went so far as to say that if the teacher got in he would do whatever he said. But Truman urged the boys who were eager to help him to go on in and not make any trouble. He said it was his problem and he would have to settle it alone as best he could. So they went in, and Truman and I were left alone.

"Truman brought some kindling from the coal house and built a fire, and we stood around it to keep warm.

"'I've got to get ahead of them some way,' Truman said, as much to himself as to me. 'I'll have to beat them or I'm done for. And if I give up the school, that

means no spring term at the academy. I've either got to outwit Bud and his crowd or give up the school.' Just then a strong wind blew the smoke in our eyes and started them to smarting. This gave Truman an idea.

"'I might smoke them out,' he said thoughtfully. 'If I could only get to the roof, I could stuff this old coat down the chimney. You wait here, Sarah, while I look around for a ladder.'

"He strolled to the back of the building where there were no windows, got down on his hands and knees, and crawled under the house to look for a ladder that had been there. But the ladder was gone. He examined the walls of the schoolhouse, but they were smoothly weather-boarded and gave no foothold.

"He got an armful of kindling to build up the fire, and presently, though it was n't noon, we opened our lunch basket and ate our dinner. A cold wind had risen and the fire was getting low. Whatever Truman did must be done quickly, for the short winter afternoon would soon be over.

"I shivered and edged nearer to the fire.

"'I wish I had Belle's new cape,' I said. 'It would keep me good and warm. Did you see Belle's new dolman and hat that she got while she was at Clayville yesterday, Truman?' I asked idly, just for something to say.

"He did n't answer me at once. Then, 'Has anyone else seen them?' he asked quietly. 'I mean anyone else except our own folks.'

"No, not a soul,' I said. 'No one knows she even went to town.'

"Truman stared at me blankly. 'I wonder if I could do it,' he murmured.

"'Why I'm sure you could,' I said, not in the least knowing what he was talking about, but eager to encourage him in any way I could.

"'I'll try it!' he cried. 'You go in, Sarah, and tell them I'll be back in an hour.' With that he started down the road, and I went in and gave them his message. Some of the boys hooted and laughed and said they might as well go home, but finally decided to wait.

"Less than an hour from the time Truman left some of the scholars impatiently watching

the road for his return were surprised to see a lady approaching on horseback from the opposite direction. She got off her horse

"The teacher is out just now. Won't you have a chair?" said Bud

in front of the schoolhouse and looked helplessly around. Bud McGill dashed out and tied her horse to the fence. The girls said she must be a stranger, for none of them had ever seen her before.

"A plaid dolman of the newest style, trimmed with fringe, fell nearly to her knees, and she wore a wide black beaver hat with a thick veil and glasses. She walked with mincing steps to the door, daintily holding

up her long black riding skirt. Just inside she turned to Bud.

"'Are you the teacher?' she asked softly.

"'No, ma'am,' Bud said politely, 'the teacher is out just now. Won't you have a chair?'

"The lady sat down at the teacher's desk and began to fumble with her veil. One of the girls came forward and deftly removed the pins that held it in place. The veil slipped off, and there sat Truman dressed in sister Belle's new clothes! There were shouts and shouts of laughter in which even Bud was forced to join. He came forward and offered Truman his hand.

"'You beat,' he said. He never made any more trouble and we had a good school the rest of the winter.

"See who gets to sleep first and we'll have another story real, real soon."

A WISH THAT CAME TRUE

"Grandma," said Alice one evening when she and Bobby and Pink had come into Grandma's room, "do you believe that if you look over your right shoulder at the new moon and make a wish that it will come true?"

"Naw," jeered Bobby, "course not."

"Well, I don't know," Grandma answered thoughtfully. "A wish made that way could come true. I made a wish once over a white horse and a red-haired girl that came true."

"Tell us about it Grandma. Please tell us," coaxed Alice.

Grandma found her knitting and began.

"The red-haired girl," she said, "was Betty Bard, our preacher's granddaughter. She had lived at the parsonage with her grandparents for nearly a year, and next to Annie Brierly she was my best friend. The white horse belonged to old Mrs. Orbison, who with several other women had come to help sister Belle quilt her 'Rose of Sharon.'

"Betty and I were playing under the apple tree in the side yard. That is, we were trying

to play. We could n't find any game we liked. We kept thinking that this might be our last afternoon together. You see, conference was to meet the next week, and Betty did n't seem to think her grandfather would be sent back to preach on Redding circuit. I did n't think so either. Redding circuit was very hard to please, and though Father never found fault with any of our preachers and always paid his tithes, still I knew that Brother Bard was not popular. Betty said it was because he did good by stealth and no one ever found it out.

"'If I move away,' said Betty as we sat under the apple tree talking that afternoon, 'you may have my playhouse rock at school, Sarah, and all my dahlia roots, and the black kitten. The kitten's name is Bad Boy because he jumps on the table when no one is looking. And you must be sure to dig the dahlias up before frost.'

"Just then Mrs. Orbison's voice floated out through the open sitting-room window.

"'It all depends on the sermon he preaches tomorrow,' she said. 'If they don't like it, a letter goes to the Presiding Elder saying we will not tolerate Brother Bard another

year and that in case he is sent back against our wishes we will not pay him anything.'

"I looked quickly at Betty to see if she had heard, and I knew by the flush on her cheeks that she had. I put my arm through hers and we walked slowly toward the front gate. It was then I made my wish. I looked at Mrs. Orbison's white horse turned out to graze in the orchard across the road and at Betty's red head, and I said to myself, 'I wish for Betty not to move away.' Out loud I said to Betty, 'Can't you tell your grandpa to preach a sermon they'll like, Betty, so you won't have to go away?'

"'But how would he know what they'd like?' she asked in a puzzled tone.

"'Oh, just something pleasant,' I answered cheerfully, 'something nice and pleasant.'

"'I'll tell him what Mrs. Orbison said,' she promised before she went home, 'and he can do what he thinks best.'

"We stopped at the parsonage the next morning to take Betty into the surrey with us because her grandma seldom went to meeting, not being very strong. I could hardly wait till Betty and I got around a corner of the church to ourselves.

"'What did your grandpa say?' I asked eagerly.

"'He said he'd do his duty as he saw it, and grandma said he stayed up all night. She crept downstairs three times to beg him to come to bed.'

"This did not sound very encouraging, but when I heard the text I breathed a sigh of relief. It was, 'Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord as I also do.' I did n't know what it meant, but it sounded like a safe text, and I became so interested in watching a robin hopping on the window sill that I did not notice what Preacher Bard was saying until I felt Betty straighten up and clutch my hand.

"I looked around to see what had happened, and I knew in a minute that he had not preached a sermon to please them. Amazement, indignation, surprise, showed plainly in the upturned faces. I won't try to tell you what was in that sermon, only this — that, in the hope of making things easier for his successor, Reverend Bard had undertaken in a kindly way to open the eyes of the Mt. Zion people to some of their faults. They had

found fault with all the preachers. Now he pointed out a few of their own shortcomings, and they didn't like it—no, indeed, not a bit.

"When it was over, the congregation poured out of the church, filled the little yard, and overflowed into the graveyard beyond. No one offered to leave. They stood around in groups—whispering, shaking their heads gravely, pressing their lips in grim lines.

"As soon as the preacher left for his afternoon appointment the storm broke. No one paid any attention to Betty as she stood at the horseblock with me waiting for Father to come round with the surrey. Everybody talked at once.

" 'He doesn't preach the straight gospel—he tells too many tales.'

" 'He doesn't visit enough.'

" 'He favors pouring, when we've always stood for immersion.'

"These remarks and many others Betty and I heard as we waited there for Father. Betty must have stood it just as long as she possibly could. Then suddenly she jerked away from me and climbed to the horseblock. I can see her now—her red hair flying in the breeze, her eyes shining, her cheeks flushed.

" 'My grandfather's the best man in the world,' she cried, and stamped her foot angrily. 'He's the best man in the world, I tell you.

The congregation stood around in groups—whispering and shaking their heads gravely

I don't care what you say, he's the best man in the world,' and she crumpled down in a little sobbing heap.

"Father came up then and, putting an arm around Betty, he said, 'Let us pray,' and everybody bowed his head and Father prayed. He prayed a long time, and at the last there were lots of 'Amens' and 'Praise the Lords' just as in big meeting.

"The second Father finished, an old man stepped out in front and said in a halting way that he would like every one to know that when his cow died in the winter Preacher Bard had bought him another. That started things. A young man said the preacher had sat up with him every other night for six weeks when he had typhoid fever. A boy said the preacher had bought him school books, and the Widow Spears said he had given her twenty dollars when her house burned. An old lady told how he read one afternoon a week to her husband who was blind, and so on and on and on. Everybody wanted to tell something good about Preacher Bard.

"Before the meeting broke up a big donation party was planned for Monday night, and Mother got Mrs. Bard to let Betty come home with us so she would n't give it away. Monday was a busy day. While the women baked and cooked for the party, the men raised money to put a new roof on the parsonage, to buy a suit of clothes for Brother Bard, a black silk dress for Mrs. Bard, so stiff it would stand alone, and a blue delaine for Betty.

"How we surprised the Bards that night when we all went in, and what a good time we

had! But the best part was when Deacon Orbison, who had been opposed to the preacher from the first, got up on a chair and made a speech. He said it seemed to him Redding circuit could not afford to lose a man like Reverend Bard, that his salary and benevolences had been made up in full, and that a letter would be sent the Presiding Elder asking that he be returned for another year. He was returned, and Betty and I sat together at school that winter, so you see I got my wish.

"Well, well, if it is n't bedtime for three little children I know. Pass the apples, Bobby, please, and next time I 'll tell you—well, I just don't know what I shall tell you next time, but I 'll have something for you."

JOE'S INFARE

"I think tonight I'll tell you about my brother Joe's infare," said Grandma one evening when Bobby and Alice and Pink had come to her room for their usual good-night story. "But first," she went on, before the children had time to ask any questions, "I'd better tell you what an infare was. It was a sort of wedding reception which took place at the bridegroom's home, usually the day after the wedding. It was the faring or going of the bride into her husband's home and was celebrated with great rejoicing and a big feast.

"Joe had married Sally Garvin, who lived four miles from us by the road but only two miles through the fields. They had been married the day before, and we were to have the infare.

"Mother and the girls and Nanny Dodds had baked and cooked for a solid week. And before that they had cleaned the house from top to bottom, and we had mowed and raked and swept the big front yard and the orchard across the road and the pasture lot by the house. Now the great day had arrived.

"Stanley had gone in our surrey to drive the bridal couple home, and Truman and the girls had ridden horseback to meet them. Charlie had brought Hunter, Stanley's colt, down to the barn lot so he could go with them. But Mother was afraid to have him ride the colt, not knowing that he practiced riding him every day in the pasture field.

"From my lookout on the rail of the front portico I saw the first of the guests come over the top of two-mile hill. There was a number of young men and girls on horseback, followed by our surrey with Stanley driving. On the back seat I knew the bride and groom sat.

"I waited for nothing more. I jumped down and rushed off to the kitchen to tell Mother. Mother gave Nanny some instructions about the dinner, slipped off the big gingham apron that covered her gray silk dress, patted her hair before the mirror in the hall, and, taking Father's arm, went down the path between the rows of bachelor's buttons, foxglove, Canterbury bells, and ribbon grass to welcome her first daughter-in-law.

"When Sally and Joe had left Sally's home, a number of friends and relatives had started with them. These had been added to all

along the way by other friends, so that there was quite a crowd of folks when they reached our house, besides lots of people who had already come.

"As soon as Mother and Father had greeted Sally, Belle and Aggie hurried her upstairs to the spare chamber to put on her wedding dress. Sally was little, with pink cheeks, and brown curls which she wore caught at the top of her head and hanging down her back very much as the little girls wear their hair now, only the young ladies of that day wore a high-backed comb instead of a ribbon. She wore a new gray alpaca trimmed in narrow silk fluting, very pretty, but nothing like what the wedding dress would be. The wedding dress had been made in Clayville, and Belle and Aggie and everybody else were eager to see it.

"Joe brought up the telescope which held Sally's things and went back downstairs. The girls were going to help Sally dress, and I kept as much out of sight as possible so I could see and yet not be seen.

" 'Open it up, Aggie, please,' said Sally, pointing to the telescope, 'and lay my dress on the bed. I do hope it's not wrinkled.'

"Aggie lifted the telescope from the floor to a chair.

" 'My goodness, but it's heavy!' she cried. 'What in the world is in it, Sally?'

"Sally turned from the mirror.

" 'Heavy?' she said surprised. 'Why, there's hardly anything in it. I packed it myself. I wanted to be sure my dress would n't be wrinkled, so I just put in the dress and a few other things to do until tomorrow.'

"Aggie rapidly unbuckled the straps and lifted up the lid. Sally gave a smothered cry and caught Belle's arm.

" 'Somebody has made a mistake,' she gasped. 'It is the wrong telescope!' and she threw herself across the bed and burst into tears.

"The telescope was packed tight full with towels, pillow slips, tablecloths, and sheets and was to have been brought over the next day with the rest of Sally's things. In the excitement of leaving, some one had carried it down and placed it in the surrey instead of the one containing the wedding dress.

" 'You look awfully sweet in this little gray dress, Sally,' Aggie tried to console her. But

it was no use, for Sally knew quite well that waiting downstairs were girls in dresses that looked much more bridelike than the gray alpaca. To be outshone at one's own infare — well, it was no wonder she cried!

"Belle suggested that Stanley or Truman go back for the wedding dress, but Sally objected to this. She said people would laugh at her and never forget that she had gone to her infare and left her wedding dress at home.

"Suddenly a thought came to me. Hunter was still in the barn lot. Charlie could ride him, and he went like a streak. It was only two miles through the fields to Sally's home. I never stopped to think that Mother would be frightened if she knew Charlie was on Hunter, or that Father would probably forbid it, or that Charlie might ruin his new Sunday suit. I slipped out of the room and went in search of Charlie. I found him out front pitching horseshoes, and in no time at all he was off to Sally's home without a soul knowing about it. Then I went upstairs to tell the girls what I had done.

"They were not very hopeful. It did n't seem possible that Sally could stay upstairs

till Charlie got back with the dress, but she said she would wait a little while anyway. She got up and bathed her face, and Belle and Aggie went down to entertain the guests. Belle started several games, such as 'Strip-the-Willow' and 'Copenhagen,' and Aggie played the piano.

"I was everywhere—in the kitchen begging Nanny to hold the dinner back as long as she could (I had let her into the secret), on the hill behind the house watching for Charlie, and in the spare chamber trying to cheer Sally up, for at the end of an hour there was no sign of Charlie.

"What could have happened? He had said he could make it in less than an hour. He had been gone an hour and twenty minutes! People were wondering why Sally did not appear. They had lost interest in the games and were dropping out and sauntering toward the house. Aggie had played everything she knew over and over. Belle had run up to tell Sally she would have to put on the gray dress and come right down, but Sally had coaxed for five minutes more. Belle went back and started the folks singing 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' The five minutes were up and

Sally was putting on the gray alpaca dress when Charlie came.

"The people who had begun to wonder what was keeping the bride forgot about it when Sally came down and stood with Joe to receive their good wishes and congratulations. Her dress was heavy cream-colored silk with tiny pink rosebuds scattered all over it, and the full skirt was ruffled clear to the waist. The round neck and elbow sleeves were finished with filmy white ruching, and she wore white satin slippers. With her pink cheeks and shiny brown curls I thought she was the very prettiest bride any one ever saw.

"When they had gone into the dining room, where Annie Brierly and some other little girls were waving peach switches over the tables to keep the flies and bees away and Sally was saying who should sit at the bride's table, Charlie told me what had kept him. He had found the Garvins' house locked up and had had to climb in a window to get the telescope. The dog had seen him as he had gotten in and would n't let him come out until Charlie had fed him and made friends with him.

"Then some one called us and said that Sally wanted Charlie and me to sit at the

bride's table. No one could have been more surprised than we were, for we had n't expected to eat till the third table at the very soonest, and here we were invited to sit at the bride's table and have our pick of the choicest food!

"There! I hear Mother calling. Good night, good night, good night."

PUMPKIN SEED

"Well, well," said Grandma one evening when Bobby and Alice and Pink asked for a story. "I wonder if I can think of anything tonight." She found her knitting and went on in a puzzled tone. "I thought of something today to tell you about. Let me see, what was it? Oh, I remember now. It was the pumpkin pie at dinner that set me thinking about the pumpkin seed that Father gave brother Charlie and me to plant."

"It was in the spring. The fish were biting fine, and one afternoon Charlie and I were all ready to go down to the deep hole under the willows to fish. Charlie had cut new poles and hunted up hooks and lines, and I had packed a lunch, for you do get awfully hungry sitting on the creek bank all afternoon. We were out behind the barn digging bait when Father came around the corner and saw us.

"'I've just been looking for you children,' he said. 'I want you to take these pumpkin seeds down to the cornfield in the bottom and plant them.' Then, seeing our fishing tackle,

he added, 'It won't take long, and when you finish you may go fishing.'

"Of course Charlie and I were disappointed. We had n't been fishing that year yet. It had been a late spring, with lots of rain, and on the bright days there had been so many things that we could do around the house and garden that we could n't be spared to go fishing. And now, with everything all ready, to give it up even for an hour or two was a trial.

"We started for the cornfield, Charlie carrying the poles and the can of bait and I the lunch and the paper sack of pumpkin seed. The pumpkins we were to plant were to be used to feed the stock — cow pumpkins they were called, and they were big and coarse-grained and not good for pies.

"Well, Charlie and I started down at the lower end of the field and we planted a few seeds. But there was such a lot of the seed and the field was so big and the lure of the creek with the shade under the willows and the fish biting was so great that we could think of nothing else. We stopped to examine our bait to see if the worms were still living. When we went back to work Charlie wondered

what was the use of planting so many old pumpkins, anyhow, when Father had already planted as many as usual in the upper cornfield.

"'We might plant a whole lot of seed at once,' he said, 'but still it would take us a long time.'

"'I know what to do!' I cried, 'Let's hide the sack of seed in this old stump and come back tomorrow and plant them.' After a few half-hearted protests from Charlie, this was what we did. We buried the sack of seed in an old, rotten stump, covered it deep with the soft, rich loam, and away we went to the creek to fish.

"Charlie baited both our hooks with the fishworms, and we would spit on our bait each time for luck. The charm must have worked, for when it was time to go home we had caught a nice lot of sunfish, tobacco boxes, silversides, and suckers. Truman cleaned them for us, and Mother dipped them in corn meal and fried them a golden brown. We had them for supper, and every one said how good they were and no one thought to ask us anything about the pumpkin seeds.

"I thought about them that night after I had gone to bed and wished that we had stayed and planted them as Father had told us to. But then Charlie and I would go down first thing in the morning, dig the sack out of the stump, plant the seeds, and everything would be all right.

"But it began to rain in the night, and it rained all the next day. The day after, it was too wet, and the day after that Charlie was busy. Then it rained again, and after a while I forgot all about the pumpkin seeds. It was several weeks before I thought of them again. You could n't guess what made me think of them then, so I will tell you.

"When we went to meeting on Sundays, Charlie and I always tried to remember the text of the sermon to say when we got home, for Mother was almost sure to ask us what it was. One Sunday I was saying it over and over to myself so that I could remember it, when suddenly the meaning of it came to me and I was surprised to find that it had something to do with me. The text was 'Be sure your sin will find you out,' and in a flash I knew it meant that if you did anything wrong you could n't keep people from

knowing about it. Then I thought of the buried pumpkin seed which Charlie and I had meant to go back and plant.

"Father had never said a word about the pumpkins not coming up, though he must surely have noticed it long before this. Perhaps he thought the seed had been bad, but still it was queer he had never mentioned it.

"That night I could n't sleep for thinking how wrong it had been for Charlie and me to deceive Father about the pumpkin seed. Even the fact that we had meant to go back and plant them did n't make me feel any less guilty. When I did fall asleep, I dreamed that the room was full of pumpkins with ugly grinning faces like jack-o'-lanterns. They laughed and mocked at me and pressed closer and closer until I wakened with a frightened cry, and when Mother asked me what had scared me I could n't tell her.

"In the morning I talked it over with Charlie. We agreed to go to Father immediately and tell him that we had not planted the pumpkin seeds.

"But Father had gone to Clayville on business for a couple of days. When he came back, before we had a chance to see

him alone he told us at dinner before all the others that the pumpkin crop in the bottom

I dreamed the room was full of pumpkins with ugly grinning faces

cornfield was to be Charlie's and mine. He said that we could keep as many as we wanted to for jack-o'-lanterns on Hallowe'en and he would pay us ten cents apiece for all the rest. Think of that! Ten cents apiece for all the pumpkins we raised, and we knew that there would n't be any pumpkins! I looked across the table at Charlie, and his face was very red. I could n't say a word, but when Father left the table we both followed him and told him all about

the pumpkin seeds, and how the text had started us thinking, and everything. Father listened without a word till we had finished. Then much to our surprise he said, 'I've known for a good while what you did with the pumpkin seed. When I saw the number of fish you caught that afternoon, I wondered how you had planted the pumpkin seed so quickly. I had told Mother they were to belong to you two to do with as you pleased, but I did not intend to tell you until later. Then when I found out that you had not planted the seeds I waited for you to come to me. I believe you have learned a lesson from this experience which you will not forget. Come along with me. I want to show you something.'

"Wonderingly, without a word, we followed Father to the cornfield and straight to where the old rotten stump in the lower end of the field had been. But when we got there we could not see the stump, for coming out of it and all over it and completely covering it, were myriads of pumpkin vines—not big strong vines like the ones that grew in the fields, but thin, sickly vines crowding each other for space.

"The soil in the stump had been so rich and light that, though the sack of seeds had been deeply covered, when soaked with rain the seeds had sprouted and forced their way through the sack and up to the light and air. The vines told Father where the pumpkin seeds were as plainly as if they could have spoken.

"And now, good night, my dears, and don't forget to say your prayers, and I'll try to think up a good story for next time."

A SCHOOL FOR SISTER BELLE

"It was during the third year of the war that sister Belle got her certificate to teach. Our school had been closed for a year, first because there were no teachers, all the young men having enlisted, and secondly because there was no money to pay a teacher. The few schools in the county had been given out before Belle got her certificate. She was awfully disappointed, for she wanted to go to the academy in the spring and she did n't think Father could spare the money to send her, times being so hard.

"But since she could n't get a school she would make the best of it. She would help Aggie and Truman and Charlie and me at home, and she promised to teach the Brierly children, too. Then the Orbisons wanted to come, and to save Mother the fuss and dirt so many children would make in the house, Belle said she would hold school in the schoolhouse and let any one attend who wanted to.

"'It will give me experience, anyway,' she said, 'and dear knows the children need some one to teach them!'

"'Why don't you let them pay you?' Aggie suggested. 'A dollar apiece a month for each pupil would n't be a bit too much.'

"But Belle said some of them could n't pay and they were the ones who needed schooling the most. And the ones who could pay probably would n't, because the county should pay for a teacher.

"So one Saturday in October, armed with brooms and buckets, window cloths and scrubbing brushes and a can of soft soap, we set out to clean the schoolhouse. We scrubbed the floor and the desks and polished the stove and cleaned the windows, and on the next Monday, the date set for the opening of all the schools in the district, sister Belle took her place at the teacher's old desk.

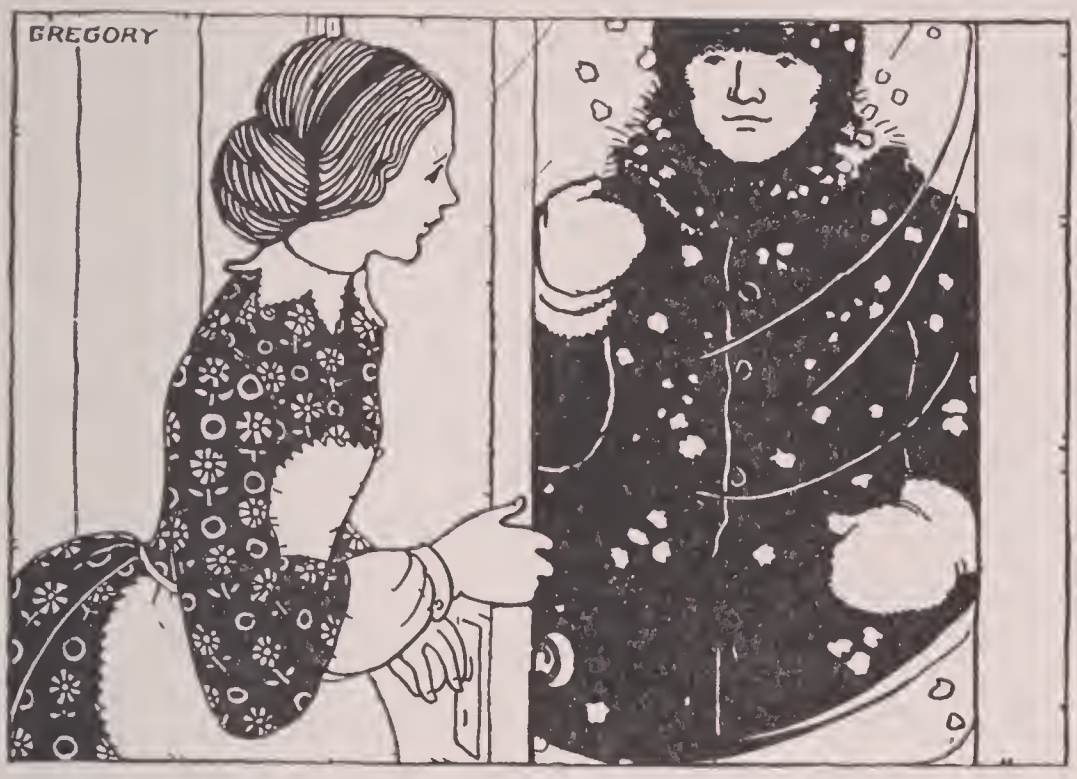
"It was n't a very different opening from the one she had planned and looked forward to so eagerly. The only difference was that there would be no payment for Belle at the end of the term.

"The last pupil to start in was Joe Slater. He was a tall, strong boy of seventeen, but was not considered very bright. He was a fine hand to work, though, and from ploughing time in the spring until the corn husking

was over in the fall, he was always busy. During the winter months he did odd jobs and went to school, but he had never got beyond the first-reader class. Because he had nothing to do he had always been more or less troublesome in school, and the very first day he came he threw paper wads and whispered and teased the younger children.

"Belle found that he knew the first reader 'by heart.' More to encourage Joe than for any other reason, she promoted him to the second reader. It was hard to tell whether pupil or teacher was the most astonished to find that Joe was actually learning to read. Belle helped him before and after school, and Joe became a model pupil and refused to do any work that would make him miss a day of school. He always came early in the morning and had the fire going and wood enough in for all day by the time Belle got there.

"So Belle was surprised to find Joe's seat empty one snowy morning in December. His sister Nancy said he had gone to the railroad in a sled to get some freight for Mr. Grove. They lived on Mr. Grove's place, and Joe could not well refuse to do this for



On the steps a big man was stamping his feet and shaking the snow from a fur-collared great-coat

him. Nancy did say, though, that Joe had wanted to wait until Saturday, but Mr. Grove was afraid the sledding snow would go off before that time. So Joe had started long before daylight, hoping to get back to school in time for the afternoon session.

"About half-past eleven there was a loud knock on the door. It was snowing and blowing, and we all turned around to look when Belle went to open the door. On the steps a big man in a fur cap was stamping his feet and shaking the snow from a fur-collared great-coat. Belle said afterward

that she knew him instantly—it was the new county superintendent—but she could n't imagine why he had come. She had seen him at institute in Clayville, but none of us children had ever seen him before.

"Belle soon found from his talk that he thought he was in the Cherry Flat school. When she told him where he was and the peculiar circumstances of our school, he was very much surprised.

"'Why, I can't understand it at all,' he said. 'I was talking to the station agent this morning, asking how to get to Cherry Flat school, and a boy who was warming himself at the stove spoke up and offered to take me there. He was on a sled and of course I jumped at the chance. He let me out at the forks of the road, and here I am, three miles from the Cherry Flat school, you say.'

"'I bet it was Joe,' Betty Bard whispered to me.

"Now that the superintendent was there and could n't get away until the storm let up, he made a speech. Then he listened to our recitations and asked Belle a great many questions, such as how many pupils she had,

where they lived, and whether she received any pay at all for teaching. She told him about her certificate and her failure to get a school, and he wrote it all down in a little notebook.

"The storm grew worse and worse. The wind whistled around the schoolhouse and rattled the windows, and the falling snow looked like a thick white blanket.

"Belle asked us to share our dinners with the superintendent, and we did. He sat on one of the desks and told us stories while he ate everything we gave him—bread and apple butter, hard-boiled eggs, ham sandwiches, pickles, doughnuts, mince and apple pies, and cup cakes. When he left we were all good friends and we filled his pockets with apples. He said he would eat them as he walked along to Cherry Flat school, but he didn't have to walk. Truman took him in our sled, and we all stood in the door and waved until he was out of sight.

"No one could get Joe to say a word about the superintendent's visit, but everybody thought he had brought him there on purpose, hoping in this way to help Belle. He was a great deal smarter than people

gave him credit for, and Belle had helped him and he wanted to do something for her.

"But if sister Belle nourished any secret hopes that the unexpected visit would help her in any way, she gave them up as the weeks went by and she heard nothing from the superintendent.

"School went on just as usual, though. Christmas came, and Belle did n't have money for the usual treat. But we had lots of sorghum molasses, and Mother let her have a taffy pulling in our kitchen and we had lots of fun.

"Everybody got along well in their books and we were going to have last day exercises, as we always did, with recitations and songs and games. Belle staid late at the schoolhouse the evening before and reached home just as Truman came in from the postoffice. He handed her a long, thin envelope and she tore it open and read the letter it contained. Before she got through she was dancing all around the kitchen, laughing and crying at the same time, and Mother took the letter from her hand and read it aloud.

"I can't remember how that letter read, but it was from the board of education.

They said they had decided to put our school back on the pay roll and that they understood that Belle had taught it in a very satisfactory manner since the opening of the term. She was to send her record of attendance and they would forward the five salary vouchers of thirty dollars each, which were due her. There was some more about its being unusual, but that they felt she deserved it. It was no wonder Belle was so happy, was it?"

ANDY'S MONUMENT

Bobby and Alice and Pink had been telling Grandma about the soldiers' monument that was to be placed in the courthouse yard.

"It is to be made of granite," said Bobby, "and the names of all the soldiers from this county who died or were killed in the war will be cut on one side of it."

"Well, well," said Grandma thoughtfully, "that makes me think of a monument I knew about long ago, but this monument was n't made of granite."

"Marble, may be," suggested Alice.

"No, not marble, either. You never heard of a monument like this. But, there, I might as well tell you about it," and Grandma polished her spectacles, found her knitting, and began:

"This monument was for a soldier, too. Andy Carson was his name. He was a very young soldier, only fifteen years old, but large for his age, and he ran away from home and enlisted. Three times he ran away and twice his father brought him back, but the third time he let him go.

"But poor Andy never wore a uniform or saw a battle. He died in camp two weeks after he had enlisted and he was buried in our cemetery, with only Father to read a chapter out of the Bible and say a prayer, because the preacher was clear at the other end of the circuit.

"Right away Mrs. Carson began to plan for a monument for Andy. At first it was to be just an ordinary monument, but the more she thought about it the grander she wanted it to be. Nothing could be too good for Andy. He should have the biggest monument in the cemetery—a life-size figure. But she could n't decide whether to have the figure draped in a robe with a dove perched on the shoulder or to have it wearing a uniform and cap. Mrs. Carson finally settled on the uniform, though she could n't give up the idea of the dove, so there was to be a dove in one outstretched hand.

"But the Carsons had no money and they did n't like to work. If anyone mentioned work to Mr. Carson, he would begin always to talk about the misery in his back. When brother Charlie had a job he did n't want to do, he would bend over with his hand

on his back, screw up his face as if he were in great pain, and say, 'Oh, that misery in my back!'

"Mother said Mrs. Carson had not been lazy as a girl, but that she had grown discouraged from having so many to do for and nothing to do with. Sometimes she came to visit Mother, because Mother was always nice to everybody. She was very tall and thin, with a short waist, and she wore the longest skirts I ever saw and a black slat sunbonnet.

"There was a big family of children—a girl, Maggie, older than Andy, and Willie, a boy a year younger, and four or five smaller children. The older ones came to school part of the time, but none of them ever came to church—partly because they had no proper clothes, I suppose.

"They lived on a farm left them by Mrs. Carson's father. The land was all run down and worn out. It was covered with briars and broom sage and a stubby growth of trees. Fences were down, and the buildings were unpainted and old.

"So, though the Carsons talked a great deal about Andy's monument, no one ever

thought they would get one. But Mother said it was the first thing Mrs. Carson had really wanted for years and years and people generally got the things they wanted most if they were willing to work hard for them. And it turned out that all the Carsons were willing to work hard for Andy's monument. It was astonishing the way they worked.

"Mrs. Carson and the children started with the house and yard. They cleaned the rubbish off the yard and raked and swept it and planted flowers. They made the stove wood into a neat pile and swept up the chips and patched the fence and whitewashed it. By this time Mr. Carson had the fever, too. He started to clear off the land, all the family helping him. All summer long they worked, early and late, cutting out the briars and underbrush, burning broom sage, building fences, and by fall you wouldn't have known it for the same place. They worked for a number of other people, too, and made a little money, besides taking seed corn and a pair of little pigs and other things they needed in payment.

"Well, it took a lot of money for a monument like Andy's was to be, but the Carsons worked and saved for it. It seemed as if they had set a new standard for themselves and were trying hard to live up to Andy's monument.

"They painted the house and repaired and whitewashed the outbuildings and put a paling fence around the front yard. They got lace curtains and a store carpet for their best room, and when Father got us a piano, Mrs. Carson bought our organ for a trifle. They got new clothes and dishes and table-cloths, and every Sunday they all came to meeting and asked folks home with them to dinner just as anybody else did.

"Dave Orbison was courting Maggie, and Willie was ready to go to the academy. He wanted an education and came to our house every week to get Truman to help him with his studies or to borrow books. If it had n't been for the monument, people would have forgotten that the Carsons had ever been considered lazy or shiftless.

"But Mrs. Carson was always talking about the monument. She had never had

Andy's funeral sermon preached, and she planned to have it preached the Sunday after the monument was set up.

"And at the end of three years they had enough money, but for some reason they did n't get the monument. Everybody wondered about it. Weeks went by, and still no news of the monument. Willie often came to our house, but he never mentioned it. Then one day Mrs. Carson came. She had a horse now, and she looked longer and thinner than ever in her black calico riding skirt.

"Mother was fitting a dress on me—a red wool delaine for Sundays—but Mrs. Carson dropped into a chair without even glancing at it.

"'Mrs. Purviance,' she began immediately, 'I want your honest opinion about something. For over three years now we've been saving for Andy's monument, and until a few weeks ago I never had a thought but that that was the right thing to do with the money. But one night I got to thinking that here was Willie wanting an education, and Maggie getting ready to be married and no money to help her set up housekeeping, and Lissy

longing for music lessons, and I could n't sleep for thinking. And, Mrs. Purviance, I have n't had a minute's peace since. That's

"Mrs. Carson," said Mother, "you have given Andy a better monument than you can ever set up in the cemetery"

why I have n't ordered the monument. I can't make up my mind to it. It'll be a long time before we can help Willie much if we spend the monument money. It looks as if he ought to have his chance. And of course the money won't help Andy any, but I had set my heart on a fine monument for him. I don't know what to do," and she started to cry.

"'Mrs. Carson,' Mother said gently, and there were tears in her eyes, too, 'if you want to know what I really think, I'll tell you. I think that as far as honoring Andy is concerned you and your family have already given him a much better monument than any you can ever set up in the cemetery.'

"Mother ran a pin straight into me and I jumped, and Mother said she was done with me for a while. I went out, and that was the last I heard of the monument until the Sunday Andy's funeral sermon was to be preached.

"There had been so much talk about the monument and the long put-off funeral sermon that there was an unusually large crowd at the church that day.

"And some of them were disappointed, for when the service was over and we filed out, the Carsons first, past the flower-decked graves to the corner where Andy was buried, there was Andy's grave adorned with only a plain little head stone. But grouped around it stood his family, and the way that family had improved in the three years since Andy's death—well, as my mother said, that was

a pretty fine monument for Andy, don't you think so?

"And now don't forget your 'apple a day,' and good night to everybody."

MEMORY VERSES

Grandma had been reading aloud from Pink's Sunday-school paper and when she finished she said:

"We did n't have anything like this when I was a little girl. We did n't even have any Sunday school. The nearest thing to Sunday school was when we recited our memory verses on meeting day. Every week we learned so many verses from the Bible, and on meeting day the preacher heard us recite them.

"I remember one year—it was Reverend Bard's second year—that in order to get the children to take more interest in learning the verses, the preacher offered a Testament to the one who could say the most verses by a certain time. We were all eager to get the Testament, and we did study harder than usual.

"The contest was to take place on Sunday afternoon. There was to be preaching in the morning, dinner on the grounds, and in the afternoon a prayer meeting and the memory-verse contest. There would be a

large crowd, and anyone who wanted to could try for the Testament. Even the smallest children would say what verses they knew.

"Charlie was always hunting for the shortest verses, and he had n't learned very many of any kind till toward the last. Then he learned five or six a day and carried a Bible around in his pocket wherever he went and studied every spare minute.

"I had been getting my verses regularly every week and I had a good memory. So I was n't much afraid of anyone beating me except Charlie or Annie Brierly or maybe Betty Bard, the preacher's granddaughter Betty knew a lot of verses, but at the last minute she was likely to get to thinking of something else and forget them.

"On Saturday Betty and Annie came to see me, and Betty said that Lissy Carson was going to try for the Testament, too. The Carsons had n't been coming to meeting very long, but Betty, when she had been there to call with her grandfather a few days before, said Lissy knew fifty-one verses.

"'And I think she ought to have the Testament,' announced Betty. 'Grandfather

said it would encourage the whole family. If you two girls and Charlie and I let her say more verses than we do, she would get it.'

"'But if we knew more verses and just let her get the Testament on purpose,' put in Annie, 'it would n't be right, would it?'

"'But see how hard she's trying,' argued Betty. 'The Carsons have nothing but the big family Bible, and Lissy has to stand by the table and learn her verses out of it. If she works so hard and does n't get anything, she might think there's no use in trying.'

"Annie looked stubborn.

"My Father said he would give me a dollar if I get the Testament,' she said, 'and I mean to try for it. You can do as you like, Betty, but I will say all the verses I know.'

"'I should hate to have Lissy get ahead of me,' I explained, 'when I've always gone to meeting and she has n't and I am in the fifth reader and she is only in the third. It would look as if she was so much smarter than I am and Mother hates to have us thought a bit backward.'

"At these arguments Betty herself looked uncertain.

"'Well, maybe you're right,' she remarked. 'I know it would disappoint Grandfather if I only said a few verses, for he says I should be an example to the other children.' Then she saw Charlie picking up some early apples in the orchard. 'Let's see what Charlie says,' she cried, and was off across the road with Annie and me following.

"When we had explained the matter to Charlie, he looked at us scornfully. 'I never saw such sillies,' he said. 'If you girls pull out, though, it will make it that much easier for the rest of us. I'm for the Testament.' Then he pretended he was reading from a book he held in his hand, 'Presented to Charles Purviance by his pastor for excellence —.' Betty started after him, and then Annie and I chased him, too, and we got to playing 'tag' and forgot all about Lissy and the Testament.

"Sunday was a beautiful day, bright and sunshiny. From miles around people came to attend the all-day service. There were many strangers. With the Orbisons came Mr. Orbison's sister and her granddaughter, a little girl about my age named Mary Lou, who was visiting away from California.

Mary Lou wore a silk dress and lace mitts and carried a pink parasol

Mary Lou wore a silk dress and lace mitts and a hat with long velvet streamers and she carried a pink parasol.

"Tables had been set up in the grove across from the church, and at noon, after the morning sermon, dinner was served. There was fried chicken and boiled ham and pickles and pie and cake and everything good you could think of, and the people had all they could eat.

"After dinner Mrs. Orbison brought Mary Lou over to where Annie and Betty and I were sitting and left her to get acquainted, so she said. But Mary Lou did n't want to

get acquainted with us. She just wanted to talk about herself. She told us that she had three silk dresses and eleven dolls and a string of red beads and a pony not much larger than a dog and ever so many other things.

" 'Don't you have a silk dress for Sunday?' she asked, looking at my blue sprigged lawn, which until then I had thought very nice.

" 'No,' I replied. And I added crossly, 'My mother says it's not what you've got that counts but what you are,' though I'm free to confess I didn't get much consolation from this thought, then.

"Pretty soon we went into the church, and after a prayer and some songs the smaller children began to go up one by one to say their verses. Brother Bard kept count and as they finished each verse he would call out the number of it.

"After a while he came to Lissy Carson, and every one was surprised when she kept on until at last she had recited sixty-one verses two more than anyone else had given so far.

"I looked at Betty, but she sat with downcast eyes and flushed cheeks. Annie looked scared, and I couldn't see Charlie. Then

Betty was called on and she said fifty-eight verses and quit.

" 'Are you sure that is all, Betty?' her grandfather said in a puzzled tone.

" 'Yes, sir,' Betty replied and took her seat.

"I came next and I had made up my mind by then that I would n't keep Lissy from getting the Testament, so I recited fifty-nine verses. I can still see the amazement in Mother's face when I sat down.

"Annie Brierly gave fifty-nine and Charlie sixty, though of course, like Betty and me, they each knew many more verses than that. Lissy would get the Testament, and I was glad of it when I saw her sitting there so proud and happy. Why did n't Reverend Bard give it to her at once and be done with it? Whatever was he waiting for? Then I saw. Mary Lou, the strange little girl, was tripping up front in all her finery as self-possessed as you please.

"And what do you think? She said sixty-three verses and got the Testament!

"Well, you can imagine how Annie and Betty and Charlie and I felt, though Charlie would n't talk about it even to me. He never admitted but what he'd said all the

verses he knew, though I knew better. Had n't I heard him at home reciting chapter after chapter when he thought no one was listening?

"We girls went around behind the church to talk it over, and Annie cried a little, and Betty stamped her foot and said she was n't an example any more and she wished Mary Lou would tear her parasol and lose her mitts and get caught in a rain and spoil her hat. And we all got to laughing and forgot our disappointment.

"And now it's bedtime for three little children I know."

THE COURTING OF POLLY ANN

One evening when Bobby and Alice and Pink came to Grandma's room they found her sitting before the fire rocking gently to and fro and looking thoughtfully at something she held in her hand. When they had drawn up their stools and sat down, she handed the object to them and they passed it from one to the other, examining it eagerly.

It was a button—a pearl button of a peculiar shape, fancifully carved. The holes were filled with silk thread, attaching to the button a bit of faded flannel as if it had been forcibly torn from a garment.

"I found that button today," Grandma began, "when I was looking for something else, in a little box in the bottom of my trunk. I had forgotten I had it. It came off my brother Stanley's fancy waistcoat, and the way of it was this:

"Stanley had been away at school all year, and when he came home he had some stylish new clothes—among other things a pair of lavender trousers and a waistcoat to match and a ruffled shirt and some gay silk cravats.

"Every Sunday he dressed up as fine as could be, and all the girls were nice to him. But he did n't pay any attention to any of them except Polly Ann Nesbit, who was the prettiest girl in all the country round about. Some people called Polly Ann's hair red, but it was n't. It was a deep rich auburn, and she had brown eyes and a fair creamy skin. Besides being pretty she was sweet-tempered, though lively and gay.

"Polly Ann had so many beaux that when she was sixteen every one thought she would be married before the year was out, and her father—Polly Ann was his only child—said that he would n't give Polly Ann to any man. He need n't have worried, for Polly Ann was so hard to please that she was still unwed at twenty when Stanley came home from school. By that time her father was telling every one how much land he meant to give Polly Ann when she married.

"Stanley had n't been home very long until he, like all the other boys, was crazy about Polly Ann, and she favored him more than any of the others. Stanley went to see her every week and escorted her home from parties and singings and took her to ride on

Sunday afternoons in his new top buggy. Father suspected he would be wanting to get married, and told him he could have the wheat field on what we called the upper place, to put in a winter crop for himself.

"Then one night at a party at Orbison's Stanley wore his new lavender waistcoat. Polly Ann wagered the other girls that she could have a button off the waistcoat for her button string, and they wagered her she could n't.

"That night when Stanley asked Polly Ann if he might see her home she said he could if he would give her a button off his waistcoat. It must have been hard for Stanley, for he knew he could never wear the waistcoat again if he did as she asked and that he could n't go with Polly Ann any more if he refused. He had no knife and he would n't borrow one, so he just wrenched a button off and gave it to Polly Ann.

"When the girls went upstairs to put on their wraps, Polly Ann showed the button to them and they had lots of fun about it. The next morning Aggie told Stanley what Polly Ann had done and how every one was laughing at him.

"Stanley was at breakfast. There was no one in the kitchen but Stanley and Aggie and me, and they did n't pay any attention to me. I remember how red Stanley's face got when Aggie told him, and his chin, which had a dimple, seemed suddenly to get square like Father's. I thought to myself that Polly Ann Nesbit had better look out, for, as Father often told us, 'he who laughs last, laughs best.' Stanley did get even with Polly Ann, though not in the way we thought he would.

"Before he went to work that morning he wrote her a letter and paid Charlie a quarter for taking it to her. Charlie told me that Polly Ann was in the front yard by herself when he gave her the letter and when she read it she just laughed and laughed, but that she put it in her pocket for safekeeping.

"Stanley was as nice as ever to her when they met, but he did n't go to see her any more or take her buggy riding on Sunday afternoons. He took Mother or me instead, and I thought it very nice. Stanley went right ahead ploughing up his wheat field just as if nothing had happened, and when he got through with that he began to fix up a little

Polly Ann was in the front yard when Charlie gave her the letter

cottage where brother Joe had lived for two years after he was married.

"He built a new kitchen, at the side instead of at the back where most people built their kitchens, so his wife could see the road when she was working, he said. And he added a front porch with railings and a seat at each end and painted the house white and set out rose bushes and honeysuckle vines and began to buy the furniture.

"Of course it caused a great deal of talk, and every one wondered whom Stanley was going to marry. The girls would laugh about Stanley's house and say they would n't marry a man who would n't let them furnish their own house. And often they would tease Polly Ann, but she would only toss her head and say nothing.

"And all the time Stanley worked away, singing and whistling as happy as could be. When any one questioned him, he would say he meant to keep bachelor's hall, or that he had n't decided what he would do, or that he planned to marry the sweetest girl he knew. Belle and Aggie were wild to know what girl he meant. They tried in every way to find out, but they could n't.

"Stanley often talked in his sleep, and they would listen to hear whether he mentioned a girl's name, but they could never understand what he said. Some one told the girls to tie a string around Stanley's great toe and when he talked to pull the string gently and he would repeat clearly what he had just said.

"One night Belle and Aggie did this, but instead of a string they used a piece of red yarn. When they were pulling it, it snapped in two, and Stanley woke up and found the yarn on his toe and jumped out of bed and chased the girls squealing and giggling into their room, and Father came out to see what was the matter.

"But finally the house was done, even to the last shining pan, and Mother had given Stanley so many quilts and blankets and things that Charlie grumbled and said there would be nothing left for the rest of us.

"One afternoon I was up at the cottage with Stanley planting some of Mother's wonderful yellow chrysanthemums by the garden fence. Stanley was building a lattice at the end of the porch for a climbing rose which he had only just set out, when the front gate clicked and there, coming up the path, was Polly

Ann Nesbit. Her cheeks were rosy and she was laughing.

" 'I've brought it myself, Stanley,' she cried gaily. 'You said in your letter to send you the button when I was ready to marry you, but I've brought it instead. Do you—do you still want it?' and she held out this little button, the very one Stanley had pulled off his lavender waistcoat to please her.

"I looked at Stanley, so straight and tall and handsome though he was in his everyday clothes, to see what he would do.

" 'Do I want it?' he cried starting toward her. 'Why, Polly Ann, I've just been longing for that button. I never wanted anything so much in my life. I was only afraid you would n't give it to me.' He put his arms around her and they went in to look at the house. When they had gone in, I saw this little button lying on the path almost at my feet, and I picked it up and skipped home to tell Mother and the girls that Stanley was going to marry Polly Ann after all.

"And now, ' 'night, 'night,' and pleasant dreams."

EARNING A VIOLIN

"And you don't like to practice!" Grandma exclaimed in surprise when Bobby told her why he did not like to take violin lessons. "But you'll have to practice, you know, or you will never learn to play. I knew a boy once, who dearly liked to practice. I think I'll tell you about him. It was my brother Charlie. Charlie had wanted a violin ever since he was just a little bit of a fellow and had first heard old Mr. Potter play on his violin.

"Mr. Potter was a traveling tailor who went around the country making and mending men's clothing. He carried his goods from place to place in pack saddles, and he always brought his violin along.

"In the evenings he would play, and we all loved to hear him. He played beautifully. All Charlie and I had ever heard before were things like 'Pop goes the Weasel,' or 'Turkey in the Straw.' There was such a difference between these tunes and what Mr. Potter played that the first time Charlie heard him play—'Annie Laurie,' I think it was—he

walked up to him and said very solemnly, 'I like a violin better than a fiddle,' and everybody laughed.

"Years before, Mr. Potter had had a thriving trade, but when I knew him he did not get much to do because store suits for men had become common. Mother always found some work for him, though, and in his spare time he gave violin lessons.

"He was in our neighborhood several weeks each spring, and one winter Charlie determined to have a violin and be ready to take lessons when he came next time.

"So right away he began to save money for a violin. But there was n't much Charlie could do to earn money, and it looked as though he would never get enough for a violin, let alone enough for an instruction book and lessons. But he did get the violin, and this is how it came about.

"It was one of the coldest winters anyone remembered in years. A deep snow lay on the ground for weeks and weeks, and the roads were frozen hard and as smooth as glass.

"There was a sawmill about eight miles down the road from our house, and every

"I like a violin better than a fiddle," said Charlie to Mr. Potter

day we could see men passing on their way to the mill with logs. Big iron hooks called 'dogs' would be driven into the logs and fastened to a heavy chain which would be hitched to a single-tree, and the log would be dragged over the smooth road by one horse. It was an easy way to get logs to the mill, and every one was hurrying to haul as many as possible before the thaw came.

"Father had cut one big walnut log when he had been called to serve on jury duty and had gone to Clayville to attend court. Before he went, Charlie asked him what he

would do with that one log and Father told Charlie he could have it. Charlie could hardly believe his ears and he asked Father whether he really meant that he could have the money for the log if he could get it to the mill. Father said that was what he meant, but afterward he told Mother he never dreamed Charlie would try to do it.

"But from the first Charlie intended to move that walnut log to the mill. He thought of nothing else. He made plan after plan. He found out from the storekeeper that the man who owned the sawmill came to the store Saturday afternoons to buy supplies for the next week. So when Charlie and I went to the store for Mother on the next Saturday we sat by the stove to warm ourselves and wait for the sawmill man. When he came Charlie, asked him whether he would buy the walnut log.

"'Well, that depends,' said the man, looking Charlie over good-naturedly. 'I'm not anxious to lay in any more logs than we've bargained for. We're going to move Wednesday.' Then when he saw the disappointment on Charlie's face he asked, 'Pretty good log, is it?'

"'Oh, yes, sir,' said Charlie eagerly. 'My father said when he cut it that it was first grade — woods-grown, ten or twelve feet long.'

"'Well, if that's the case, I reckon I could use it,' said the man. 'Be sure to have it in by Tuesday, though.'

"We went home by way of Mr. Brierly's, and Charlie got permission to borrow his logging chain and 'dogs,' as they were called. We stopped to look at the log, and Charlie declared he could get it to the mill without any trouble. He could have, too, if it had n't been for the thaw.

"Sunday was the longest day Charlie ever put in. Sometimes he would get discouraged and think he could n't do it at all. Then the next minute he would be talking about the kind of violin he would get with the money the log would bring. Father had come home for over Sunday and he would help him get started, the older boys being away from home.

"Sunday, after dinner, the weather turned slightly warmer, and by four o'clock a gentle rain was falling. When Charlie got up long before daylight Monday morning, Mother told him that it had rained hard all night.

He fed the horse and ate his breakfast, and Father helped him drive the hooks or dogs into the log. Then Charlie was off.

"He got the log as far as Sugar Creek without any trouble, and there what a sight met his eyes! Sugar Creek was out of bank, and the shallow stream, easily forded the year round, was like an angry, rushing little river filled with cakes of ice. To ford it was clearly impossible till the ice went out, and even then the current would be rapid and dangerous. There was nothing to do but wait, and Charlie unhitched the horse and came back home. It was still raining and thawing and it did n't get any better all that day. The next morning, though, the creek was clear of ice, which was some advantage.

"I went with Charlie and sat on the log, feeling very helpless while he walked up and down the creek bank trying to think of some way to get the log across. The current was so strong that, though the horse could swim it, he could not swim and drag the heavy log along.

"Charlie examined the foot-log carefully and found that it had not been moved by

the high water, being chained at each bank to a big tree. Then he made his plan. He fastened some strong rope he had brought along to the chain which went around the walnut log. Holding the other end of the rope, he got on the horse and made him swim to the opposite bank. Then he fastened the rope at that side to the single-tree and urged the horse up the bank.

"The horse tugged and pulled and finally the log moved slowly down into the water. Now came the test of Charlie's plan. If the foot-log proved strong enough to withstand the jar it would get when the walnut log hit it, everything would be all right; but if the foot-log gave way, Charlie would have to cut the rope quickly to keep the horse from being drawn back into the water, and the walnut log would float down stream and be lost.

"I almost held my breath when the walnut log, sucked rapidly down the stream by the swift current, struck the foot-log. I shut my eyes tight and did not open them until I heard Charlie shouting for joy. The foot-log had n't budged! Because of the high water Charlie thought it would be easy for

the horse to pull the log out on the ground, but the log stuck on something under the water. Charlie could n't raise the log up, and he had to let it slide back into the water. It slid back several times before it finally came out on the road.

"It was nearly noon and Charlie was wet to the waist, so he went back home to change his clothes and get a fresh horse. After dinner he started out again. He got to the mill all right and sold the log, and when he reached home late that night he had money enough for a violin.

"When Father heard about it, he was so proud of him that he doubled the money. So Charlie had more than enough for his lessons and his instruction book, too."

"And did he really like to practice?" asked Bobby unbelievingly.

"Yes, indeed, and he came to be a fine violinist and owned a violin that cost a great deal of money, but he always kept that first one, too.

"There! Mother's calling you to bed."

AT THE FAIR

"We're going to the fair tomorrow, Grandma. It's childrens' day," announced Bobby one evening when he and Alice and Pink came to Grandma's room for their usual evening call and story.

"Are you going, Grandma?" inquired Pink.

"Why, I may go. I don't know yet. Do you like to go to the fair?"

"Yeh, boy!" interrupted Bobby eagerly. "And this year they're going to give a pony away. I wish I'd get that pony."

"That would be nice," agreed Grandma. "I think I'll tell you tonight about the time we took our horse, Prince, to the fair at Clayville. I had been to the fair several times before, and I always loved to go. To get up early in the morning, and dress and eat breakfast and start before daylight with a big basket of dinner tucked away in the back of the surrey; to take the long pleasant drive through the cool of the morning and at last go through the gates into the fair grounds and see all the people and hear the noise of the sideshow barkers and the bands

and the balloon whistles and the lowing of cattle, uneasy because of their strange quarters, was every bit of it a joy to me—usually.

"But this particular year it was n't a pleasure to look forward to the fair at all, even though there was to be a balloon ascension. For when we went to the fair Father was going to take Prince along and sell him to a horse dealer. Father had raised Prince, and we all loved him, especially Charlie and I. He was nine years old, but he still looked like a colt. His coat was brown and glossy, and he was as playful and active as he had ever been. When he had been a colt, the older children had petted him and fed him sugar. Charlie and I had taken it up when they left off, so that he had always been used to children and loved them.

"But Prince had a bad habit, and that was the reason he was to be sold. He balked whenever a grown person rode or drove him. The only thing he was any good for at all was carrying Charlie and me to the store for Mother. He would take us both at once or one at a time wherever we wanted to go and never balk once while we were on his

back. Father said that if Charlie and I had been older he would have kept Prince, but by the time we would need a horse Prince would be too old to be of much use. If he could even have been trusted to take Mother to church and back when the roads were too rough to drive, Father would not have sold him. But he was sure to stop some place or other, no matter how cold the day, and refuse to budge until he got ready. So Father said he could not afford to keep him any longer, and as none of our neighbors would want him he would sell him to the horse dealer for what he could get. This would n't be much, for of course Father would tell the man that Prince balked.

"So we went to the fair as usual, except that Prince went along and was hitched with the other horses to the fence until Father should get ready to see the horse dealer some time after dinner.

"I went with Mother to Floral Hall, which was just a little, whitewashed building, and looked at quilts and fancy work and cakes and pies and pianos and stoves and pumpkins and potatoes until I got tired and wandered on ahead of Mother — who was

busily talking to some people she knew—to the door, and there was Charlie waiting for us.

"He had been out to see the cattle and poultry. He said our white-faced steer and Mother's bronze turkeys had taken blue ribbons and he wanted me to come and see them.

"As we passed our horses, Prince whinnied, and I suggested that we say good-by to Prince again. So we went over to where he was hitched to the fence. We petted him and fed him an apple that Charlie had in his pocket, and then Charlie said we would take a last ride. So he got on first and I climbed up behind him and put my arms around his waist and we were off. For a while Prince trotted about on the grass, and then we came to an opening that led into the race track. Before we realized what he was doing, Prince had turned through this opening into the circular track.

"Two men were standing at the entrance talking. One of them was an old man. The other, a big man with a wide-rimmed felt hat and high-topped boots, waved a riding whip at us and called out something

that we did not hear as we passed, but Prince kept right on. Charlie could have turned him around, but he would n't, though

Prince turned through the opening that led to the race track

I begged him to. The trainers were exercising their horses on the track, but Prince paid no attention to anything, looking neither to right nor to left. We must have been a queer sight—two children riding bareback on a big farm horse around the race track. By the time we got to the grandstand quite a crowd had gathered and they cheered us loudly as we passed. Charlie, not to be outdone, waved his hat in return.

"When we got back to the gate we had come through, Charlie pulled Prince's mane and he turned out into the grass again.

"The men were still talking, and the one who had called to us patted Prince's head and asked us if we had enjoyed our ride. Then, because it looked so silly, we told him how we happened to be on Prince at a place like that and how Father was going to sell him because he balked and would n't work and how sorry we were and afraid some one would buy Prince from the horse dealer because he was so handsome and then beat him when he found he balked.

"The old gentleman seemed greatly interested and asked us Father's name and a great many questions about Prince. We told him how he would do anything for us and was as safe as safe could be. Then we hitched Prince to the fence and said good-by to him and went to dinner. My dress was all wrinkled and my hair was mussed and my face burned from being in the sun, and Mother was not at all pleased that Charlie and I had made ourselves so conspicuous.

"But we had lots of fun that afternoon watching the races and eating peanuts and

drinking pink lemonade. There was the balloon ascension, and Father took us into some of the shows and bought us ice cream, molded into cakes and wrapped in paper, which was called 'hokie-pokie.'

"We had balloons and peanuts and canes to take home with us, and when we got in the surrey to go home Prince was gone and no one mentioned him. But when we were well out of town Father said, 'Well, children, you may rest easy about Prince. He has a good home where he will be well treated, and it is largely due to Charlie and Sarah.' And then he told us all about it.

"The man at the gate with the wide felt hat and high-topped boots was the horse dealer, and the old man with him was hunting a horse that would be safe for his little granddaughter, who had been sick and was not strong, to ride and drive. When he saw Charlie and me on Prince and heard what we said, he knew that Prince was the very horse he wanted.

"So he had bought him from Father and paid a hundred dollars, when Father had only expected to get fifty dollars at the most. He did n't care a bit because Prince balked,

for no one would use him but the little girl and he would be quite as much a pet as when we owned him.

"'And that extra fifty dollars shall go to Charlie and Sarah,' said Father, 'for their very own.'

"The next time Father went to Clayville, sure enough, he put twenty-five dollars in the bank for Charlie and twenty-five dollars for me, and he gave us each a brand new bank book with our names on the backs. We never saw Prince again, but the man who bought him took care of him and was good to him until Prince died a few years later.

"Now what shall I tell you tomorrow night? Oh, I know—a Hallowe'en story!"

HALLOWE'EN

"Grandma, tomorrow night is Hallowe'en," said Pink one evening when she and Alice and Bobby had drawn their stools close to Grandma's knee for their usual good-night story.

"Mother makes candy on Hallowe'en," Alice added, "and we have nuts and apples and false faces and witches on broomsticks and black cats and everything."

"And last year we had a party," said Pink.

"And this year," put in Bobby eagerly, "we're going to have a great, big pumpkin to make a jack-o'-lantern of. I know how to do it. Daddy told me, and he's going to help. You hollow out the insides of the pumpkin and cut round holes for the eyes and make a nose and a mouth with teeth and put a candle inside, and I'll say he'll look scary."

"Won't he though!" exclaimed Grandma. "To meet a jack-o'-lantern like that on a dark night would make a body shiver. I just know it would. Brother Charlie and

I used to save the biggest pumpkins for Hallowe'en. In the summer we would pick out certain pumpkin vines in the cornfield and take special care of them so that the pumpkins would grow extra large for jack-o'-lanterns. We would keep the dirt loosened around the roots, and when the weather was dry we would carry water from the creek to water them. We would watch to keep the worms and bugs off the vines, and then when the pumpkins began to get big we'd measure around them every few days to see which was growing the fastest. Father said we did everything but sleep with the pumpkins."

"Oh! exclaimed Pink in surprise, "did you have Hallowe'en, too, Grandma?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Grandma, "but we generally called it Hallow Eve in those days."

And she went on to tell them how the evening of October thirty-first has for years and years in many different countries been celebrated as the eve of All-hallows or All Saints' Day and is called Halloweven or, as we most often say, Hallowe'en, and how on this particular evening fairies, witches, and imps are supposed to be especially active.

"The young people in our neighborhood used to have parties," said Grandma, "and they would make taffy and play games and perform tricks intended to reveal to them their future husbands and wives.

"Sometimes these parties would be broken up by a crowd of rough boys who had not been invited, for if there was a lot of fun on Hallowe'en there was also a lot of mischief done. Nothing that could be moved was safe if left outside. Gates were carried away, wheels removed from wagons, farm machinery hidden, well buckets stolen, and roads barricaded with great logs. Some people took this time to vent their spite on anyone they did not like.

"But these rough, mischievous boys had never bothered us, for between the settlement where they lived and our farm was a strip of woods in which an old woman known as Mother Girty had been buried years and years before—in pioneer times, in fact. It was said she had been a witch, and even when I was a little girl ignorant or superstitious folks did not like to pass these woods by night. On Hallowe'en they were more afraid than ever, since on this night

witches are supposed to roam at will over the country.

"One year Mother said we could have a Hallowe'en party at our house. Charlie and I gave our biggest pumpkins, and Truman made jack-o'-lanterns out of them. Belle and Aggie decorated the sitting room with autumn leaves and bunches of yellow chrysanthemums and draped orange-colored cloth, which they had dyed by boiling old sheets in sassafras bark and water, around the walls. For lights they had the jack-o'-lanterns and just common lanterns with the orange cloth wrapped about the globes, and they put out baskets of apples and nuts. In the cellar were rows of pumpkin pies and pans of gingerbread for refreshment, when the guests should get tired of playing games and pulling taffy.

"When every one had come, Aggie made the taffy. But she did n't cook the first batch long enough and it would n't harden. They tried to pull it, but the way it stuck to their hands was awful, and such squealing and laughing you never heard. It kept Charlie and me busy bringing water for them to wash off the taffy.

"The girls put another kettle of molasses on right away, and while the taffy was being made Charlie and I slipped around the house to put a tick-tack on Mother's window. When we had got the tick-tack to working and Mother and Father had both come to the window to see what it was, though I reckon they both knew very well, we started back to the kitchen.

"But we did n't go in, for there, spread out on the porch to cool, were pans and pans of taffy. Charlie said we had better take a pan for ourselves for fear there might n't be enough to go around and we'd have to do without. So he grabbed a pan quickly and we ran around to the front of the house with it. We meant to go on the front portico, but just as we turned the corner we heard a noise as if some one were opening the door. So we crouched down close to the house for a little bit and then ran out to the lilac bush by the front gate.

"We sat down on the ground and began to work the cooler part of the taffy around the edge of the pan toward the center, but we had no butter to put on our hands to keep the taffy from sticking and I offered to go

to the kitchen to get some. We would then start pulling our taffy and quietly slip into the house where everyone else would be pulling taffy and no one would notice that we had not been there all the time.

"I stood up. It was a pitch dark night, but as I started toward the house I thought I could see something moving in the side yard under the apple tree. I told Charlie. He saw it, too, as plainly as could be. It was white and it moved about in the most terrible way. Oh, to be safe back in the house! I clutched Charlie's arm and trembled all over, I was so afraid. It seemed to be coming toward us, and suddenly I could n't stand it any longer and I screamed—the most awful, blood-curdling yells—and, pulling Charlie with all my might, I ran for the house.

"The kitchen was filled with frightened young people, for no one knew what had happened. Just as we tumbled into one door three or four white clad figures burst into the other door, and it was hard to tell which was the worst scared.

"'Ghosts!' sputtered Charlie, gasping for breath. 'Ghosts under the apple tree!'

Then everybody saw the joke and laughed. The ghosts turned out to be some of the big

I screamed the most awful blood-curdling yells

boys who had wrapped themselves in sheets to frighten the folks. The opening of the front door that Charlie and I had heard had been Truman bringing out the sheets, but my yells had scared them and they looked right sheepish and did n't say anything when Isabel Strang asked them whether they thought Mother Girty was after them.

"In the excitement and confusion, sister Belle, who was going down the cellar stairs backward with a mirror in her hand, in

which she was supposed to see the face of the man she would marry, fell halfway down the stairs, and John Strang picked her up and sure enough he was the man she married later.

"After that Charlie and I did n't say much, for the pan of taffy was still under the lilac bush by the front gate and we did n't want to go into any explanations about why we happened to be out there too.

"Here, here, don't forget your 'apple a day.' There now, good night, dears."

MEASLES

Bobby and Alice and Pink had the measles. First Bobby had taken it with a headache and a sick stomach. Then Alice had got sick with what seemed to be a cold, and at last Pink took it. She just wakened up one morning all covered with tiny red spots, and of course she knew right away that she had the measles, too.

They had all been awfully sick, but now they were better, though they still had to stay in a darkened room, which they did n't like a bit.

"It's the worst part of the measles," complained Bobby bitterly. "Just like night all the time."

"Well, then," said Grandma, who was making them a call, "let us pretend that it is night and I will tell you a story about when I had the measles a long, long time ago.

"In those days measles was considered a necessary evil for children. That is, people thought that all children must have it one time or another, and the younger you were

when you had it the less it would hurt you. All our family had had the measles except Charlie and me. We had never had the measles, and Mother was quite worried about it. She said she would n't expose us on purpose, but she did wish we'd get it before we got much older and have it over with. There had been no measles epidemic in our neighborhood for several years, and this is how one came about.

"One Saturday, late in June, Father took Charlie and me to Clayville with him. We were to visit with Aunt Louisa while he attended to his business. He let us out at Aunt Louisa's street and said when he got ready to go home he would come after us.

"Charlie and I started up the street, but neither of us had ever been there alone and all the houses looked alike to us. We could n't decide which was Aunt Louisa's.

"Finally we selected one that we were sure was hers and went around to the side door and knocked. Instead of Aunt Louisa or Mettie, a little girl opened the door and told us to come in. This was queer, because Aunt Louisa had no children. But I supposed she had company and stepped into a

sitting room that was so dark I could hardly see a thing at first. We sat very still for a while, and I wished that Aunt Louisa would come. In the dim light I made out a bed in one corner, but I did n't know there was anyone in it until a boy, who had evidently been asleep, raised up his head and looked at us in surprise. And we looked at him, too, for he certainly was funny looking with his face all covered with little red spots.

"'By, golly!' he said. 'What you doin' in here?'

"I replied with dignity that we were waiting for Aunt Louisa.

"'She does n't live here,' he said crossly, and lay down again. 'She lives in the next house. Must have been my little sister let you in. This is our house and I got the measles.'

"Charlie and I got out as quickly as we could and hurried to Aunt Louisa's, but we decided that we would not tell her or anyone else we had had such a glorious, accidental chance for the measles.

"'We might n't take the measles after all,' Charlie pointed out, 'and then Mother would be disappointed.'

"'I hope we don't take them on the way home,' I said anxiously. I didn't know then that it takes the measles germ nine days to mature and that we were in little danger of taking it before that time.

"The next day, being tired from my trip to town, I imagined I was sick and I was sure I was taking the measles. Charlie examined my face carefully, though, and said he couldn't see any red spots. In a day or two Charlie thought he was taking the disease, but there were no red spots on his face, either.

"'And if they're in you Mother says they've got to come out,' I told him wisely. 'So as long as it doesn't show on the outside we haven't got it.'

"A week passed, and after several more false alarms we came to the conclusion that we were not going to take the measles after all.

"Sunday the Presiding Elder was to be at our church and there were to be two sermons, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, with a basket dinner in between. Mother and the girls were very busy cooking and baking, or maybe some of them would have

seen that Charlie and I were not well on Saturday. I ached all over, my head most of all, and Charlie said he felt sick from his head to his toes. We slipped out to the barn and crawled up in the hay loft and lay down on the hay. Nanny Dodds almost found us there when she came out to hunt some eggs for an extra cake—Mother had already baked three cakes, but she said she had better bake four to make sure there'd be plenty.

"Charlie and I had been eating green apples. Mother always allowed us to eat green apples if we put salt on them. But we had been in the orchard and the salt was at the house, so we had n't bothered to wait, but had eaten the apples without salt. We thought it was the green apples that were making us sick. As we did n't want to be dosed with castor oil and maybe have to stay home from preaching next day, we did n't tell a soul we felt sick.

"Anyway, we were both better by Sunday morning, for who would n't have been better with a new white dress to wear and a leghorn hat with a wreath of daisies around the crown?

"But in church even my new clothes could n't help me. The sermon seemed very, very long, the air was hot and close, and I felt terribly sick. I wanted more than anything else in the world to take off my hat and lay my head in Mother's gray silk lap, but of course I was much too big to do that. I looked across to the men's side where Charlie sat beside Father, and there he was all slumped down in his seat, holding his head in his hands.

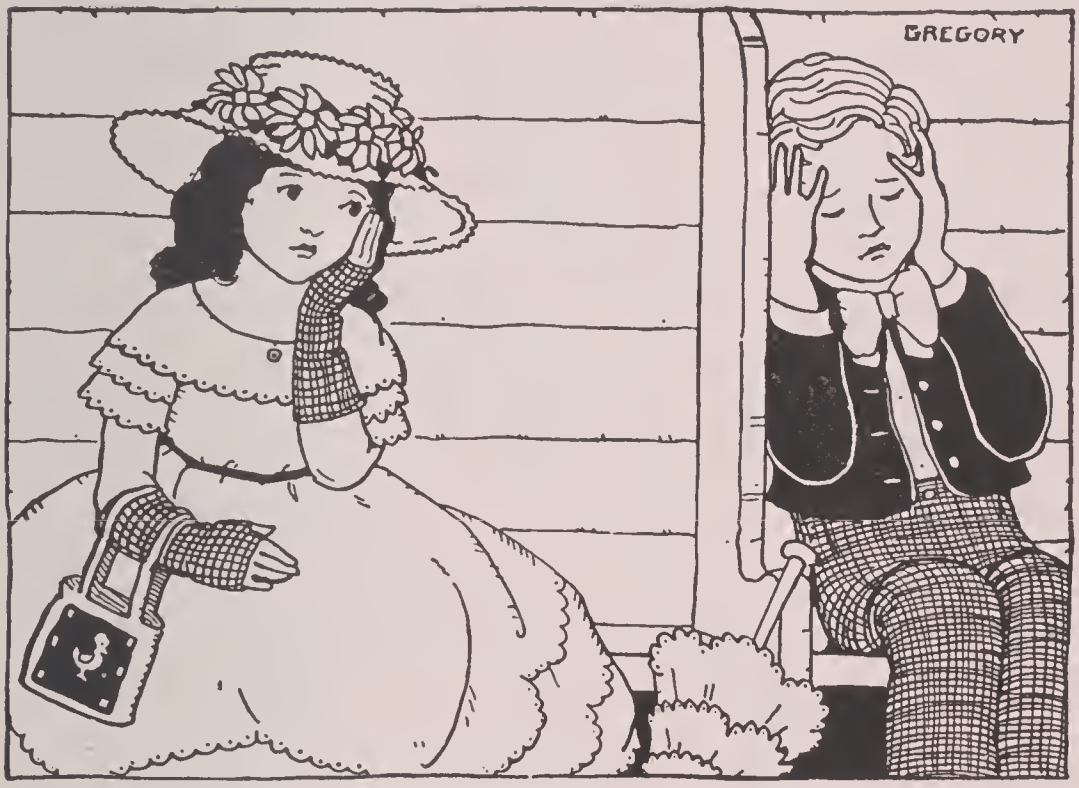
"Neither of us ate much dinner, but there were so many people eating with us that Mother did n't notice. And right after dinner we went down to the surrey and climbed in, Charlie on the front seat, I on the back.

"We covered ourselves, heads and all, with the lap robes, and there we lay and slept the live-long afternoon, until Father came to hitch the horses up to go home.

" 'These youngsters must be all tired out,' Father said when Mother and Aggie and Belle came out to get in the surrey. I raised my head up, but I was so dizzy I lay right down again, but not before Mother had seen me.

" 'Let me see in your throat, Sarah,' she demanded, and then to Father she said

solemnly, 'I knew it! The second I saw her I knew it. Sarah has the measles.' Father



I looked across to Charlie and he was holding his head in his hands

thought surely she must be mistaken, but she examined Charlie, and would you believe it? He had the measles, too.

"On the way home, with my head in Mother's lap and Charlie leaning on Belle, we told them all about going to the wrong house when we went to see Aunt Louisa, and the boy who had the measles, and everything.

" 'Just exactly nine days ago today,' Mother fairly groaned.

" 'Are n't you glad, Mother, that we surprised you with the measles?' I asked, puzzled, for she did n't seem a bit glad that we had them, though she had always talked as if she would be.

"At this Father and Belle and Aggie and even Mother laughed.

" 'If I don't miss my guess,' said Father, 'you've surprised a good many other people with the measles, too, and I bet a lot of them won't be very glad.'

"Of course a lot of folks did take the measles from Charlie and me, but the weather was warm and they all got along nicely, so there was no great harm done.

"Some of the folks wondered where in the world Charlie and I could have caught the measles. But old Mrs. Orbison, who came to see us right away, settled that by announcing, 'I always say that things like that are in the air. No one knows where they get them or how.' "

SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR

It was the evening before Thanksgiving. Grandma had told Bobby and Alice and Pink about the first Thanksgiving, celebrated so long ago by the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony to show their gratitude because their lives had been spared in spite of many hardships and because their crops had been plentiful enough to support them through the coming winter.

And she had told them how that now, on recommendation of the President, the last Thursday of November is set apart by proclamation of the governors of the different states as an annual Thanksgiving Day.

"Thanksgiving at our house was a wonderful time," Grandma said thoughtfully. "Next to Christmas, it was the best day of all the year, I think. And it always began weeks before the real Thanksgiving Day — when Mother made the mincemeat and the plum pudding and the fruit cakes.

"All day Mother and the girls would work, crumbing bread for the puddings, washing currants, slicing citron, beating eggs, measuring

sugar and spices, chopping suet and meat in the big wooden chopping bowl, and seeding raisins. I helped seed the raisins. I liked to seed raisins until I got all I wanted to eat. Then after that I did n't like the sticky things a bit.

"When everything was all mixed and ready, the pudding would be packed in muslin bags and the cake put in pans lined with writing paper and they would be steamed for hours and hours. When they were done and cool they would be put away, beside the big stone jar of mincemeat, to ripen for Thanksgiving.

"Father said that Thanksgiving came at just the right time of the year. All the fall work was done by then, the corn husked, lots of wood cut, and the butchering was over. The meathouse was filled with hams and sausage and side meat, and there was always a jar of pickled pigs' feet. The apples had been picked and the potatoes dug and both buried out in the garden alongside the cabbage and beets. The nuts had been gathered in, and the popcorn was ready to pop. The finest pumpkin had been set aside for the pies, and the biggest, proudest,

young turkey gobbler was fattened for the Thanksgiving dinner.

"And then, on Thanksgiving morning, what delicious smells came out of our kitchen! You know what they were! You've all smelled the very same kind of smells coming out of your kitchen, I know you have. Mm! mm! and the dinner! And every one of the family at home to enjoy it and lots of company, too.

"But we did n't think of just things to eat, either. Father said folks were likely to do that. We seldom had services at our church on Thanksgiving because the minister was usually off in another part of the circuit holding a meeting. But at the breakfast table, after Father had asked the blessing, to preserve and foster, as he said, the real spirit of the day, each one of us would tell something we had to be thankful for.

"And one Thanksgiving morning Charlie said he could n't think of anything to be thankful for except, of course, Father and Mother and good health and Sport, but nothing special, he said. I knew what was the matter with Charlie. He had asked Truman to lend him his gun to take along

when he went to look at his traps. Truman had refused because he had just cleaned it, and Father had said Charlie could carry a gun when he was twelve years old and not before.

"Afterward when I went with him to his traps he told me he was tired being thankful for ordinary things like those everybody else had. He wanted something different, such as a silver watch, or a Wild West pony, or a magic lantern.

"He said he could be the thankfulest boy on Sugar Creek if he had any of those things, and he thought Thanksgiving ought to come after Christmas anyhow — then a fellow would have more to be thankful for.

"We were down at the hole under the willows where we fished in summer and the boys set traps for muskrats in winter. It was getting colder, and I told Charlie I thought I'd go on to the house instead of going with him to the cabin in the sugar grove where he and Truman were keeping their skins that winter. The cabin was convenient to the traps, and Truman had put a good lock on the door and he and Charlie each had a key. I wanted to go to the house to play with

brother Joe's baby and see whether anyone else had come and to find out how the dinner was coming on. So Charlie told me to go ahead and he would come as soon as he skinned a couple of muskrats he had caught in his traps.

"There were so many of us and so much confusion that I did not notice until dinner was nearly over that Charlie was not there. When I called Mother's attention to it, she said he was probably around somewhere and would eat presently. It took a long time to serve dinner that day, and afterward a sled load of neighboring young folks came in and there were games and music and a general good time. No one missed Charlie but me, and I did n't miss him all the time, either.

"But about four o'clock in the afternoon Mother came out to the kitchen where some of the girls were popping corn and asked anxiously if anyone had seen Charlie. Belle said he had n't come in for any dinner.

" 'I can't imagine where he is,' Mother said. 'He never did a thing like this before. He may have met the Orbison boys and gone home with them, but I can't understand it at all. It is n't like Charlie.'

"Just then Truman came up from the cellar with a big basket of apples we had polished the previous day.

" 'What about Charlie?' he asked. 'Where is he? What's the trouble?'

"Mother explained that Charlie had gone to his traps early that morning and had n't been at the house since, nor been seen by any one since he had started for the cabin with two muskrats to skin.

"Truman just stared at Mother.

" 'You say Charlie went to the cabin this morning?' he repeated slowly as if he could n't believe it. 'Well, then, by jingoes, Mother, that's where he is right now!' And he went on to tell how when he was coming from feeding the stock on the upper place he had noticed that the door of the cabin was shut, but the lock was not snapped. He supposed Charlie had forgotten to tend to it as he had one other night, and so he had snapped it shut and come along home. Charlie had evidently been busy and had not heard the lock click.

" 'Oh, the poor boy!' cried Mother. 'Go see about him at once, Truman.' And she began putting things in the oven to heat.

"And, sure enough, that was where they found Charlie — he had been locked up in the cabin all day. When he found he was locked in, he had tried to pry the windows open, but they were securely nailed down. He had shouted himself hoarse and had even attempted to climb up the chimney and get out that way.

"A little later, when he was thoroughly warmed and had had a good wash and sat at the kitchen table eating his dinner, with Mother piling up good things on his plate and Charlie eating as if he were afraid some one would snatch it away before he got enough, Father came out of the sitting room and stood looking down at him.

" 'Well, son,' he said, 'have you thought of anything special to be thankful for yet?'

" 'Yes, sir,' Charlie answered, grinning. 'I'm thankful for something to eat and a fire.'

"Well, well, if it is n't bedtime already!"

TAKING A DARE

The next evening when Bobby and Alice and Pink came to Grandma's room, she was astonished to behold an ugly black-and-blue lump on Bobby's forehead, right over his eye.

"Why, what's this?" Grandma asked, laying down her knitting and examining the bruise. "Wait till I get the arnica, and then you can tell me all about it."

And while she bathed Bobby's swollen forehead with the arnica, Bobby told her how another boy had dared him to hang by his toes from the scaffolding of a half-finished house and how his feet had slipped and he had had a fall.

"He said I was afraid to try," said Bobby, "but I showed him!"

"And you got hurt into the bargain," remarked Grandma, taking up her knitting again. "Don't you know, my dear, that it is sometimes braver to take a dare than not? There is a time to say 'no,' and the boy or girl who does n't know when to say 'no' is often foolhardy rather than brave. I did n't always know that, though, and I'll tell you

how I learned it. When I was little I played so much with brother Charlie that in many ways I was like a boy. One of Charlie's codes was that he would never take a dare, and so of course it became my code, too.

"One Friday night Betty Bard came home from school with me to stay until Saturday afternoon. It was in the fall, and the nuts were ripe. On the meathouse floor, spread out to dry, were chestnuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, hickory nuts, and butternuts. Betty's grandfather was our preacher. There were no nuts of any kind on the ground belonging to the parsonage, so we had been giving Betty some of our nuts. She had already gotten hickory nuts and chestnuts, and this evening we had gathered a bag of walnuts and we were out in the wood lot shelling them.

"We each had a flat stone to lay the nut on and another stone to hit it with. We wore old leather gloves to protect our hands, for the walnut juice makes an ugly brown stain. We would lay a nut on the flat stone, hit it hard with the other stone, and the green outer covering or shell would come off easily, leaving the walnut, which would then have to be dried.

"Not far from us Charlie sat cracking walnuts, left over from the year before, for the chickens. He would crack a nut and throw it to the chickens and they would pick the meat out with their beaks. Mother said walnut meats were good for the chickens and made the hens lay, and we often had to crack walnuts for the chickens. But this evening Charlie did not want to do it. He wanted to go on the hill to look at some traps he had set for rabbits, and he offered to give me his new slate pencil if I would crack the walnuts. Any other time I should have jumped at the chance of getting a new slate pencil so easily. But this evening, I wanted to help Betty shell her nuts so we would have time the next day to play and go down to the persimmon tree.

"'Very well,' declared Charlie. He said that if I would n't help him, he would n't go with us to the persimmon tree. And without him to shake the tree, how would we get the persimmons? We had an especially fine persimmon tree that my great-grandfather had planted, and Betty and I wanted to get the fruit that was in the top branches. Charlie had promised to climb the tree for

us, but now he said he would n't do it unless I would finish cracking the walnuts.

" 'All right, you need n't,' I replied. 'We don't want you. I'll climb the tree myself. But really I did not think for a moment I would do any such thing, for, of all the trees around, grandfather's persimmon, as we called it, was the hardest to climb.

"Charlie laughed mockingly.

" 'I dare you!' he cried. 'I double dare you!'

"I jumped up, and so did Betty, and we threw our gloves to the ground and started for the persimmon tree.

" 'Are you sure you can do it?' whispered Betty.

"I had my doubts myself by this time, for, though I could go all over the gnarled old apple tree in the side yard and climb the cherry trees and the peach trees and any reasonably high tree, to climb to the top of grandfather's persimmon was a different undertaking.

"Charlie saw us talking and thought I was weakening.

" 'If you can't do it, Sarah,' he said, 'of course I'll let you off.'

" 'I can do it all right,' I answered grimly, but I wished with all my heart I had n't said I would do it in the first place.

"The lower limbs of the persimmon were so high from the ground that for a while it looked as if I should n't even get into the tree at all. Charlie offered to boost me, but I scorned his help. When finally, with the aid of a fence rail and by 'cooning,' I reached the lowest branch, my hands were scratched and swollen and hurting dreadfully. But after that it was n't as hard. As I went up, slowly and carefully, Betty and Charlie, under the tree, watched me.

" 'Be careful, Sarah,' Betty cautioned every little bit. 'Do be careful.'

" 'Higher, higher!' Charlie kept calling.

"At last I reached the top and looked down, and then the most dreadful thing happened. I got awfully sick—sick and dizzy. I closed my eyes tight and held to the trunk of the tree and felt as if I should fall any minute. If I should fall to the ground and be killed, then every one would say it was Charlie's fault. And it would n't be at all, for I should have known better than to try to climb the old tree. I thought about the new blue

delaine dress which I had never worn—they could bury me in that. And then I tried to

I tried to say my prayers but I was so dizzy that I couldn't remember a single word of them

say my prayers, but I was so dizzy, oh, so dizzy, that I could n't remember a single word of them.

"I told Charlie and Betty I was dizzy and that I was afraid I'd fall.

"At first they thought I was fooling, but they soon saw I was in earnest.

" 'Hold on tight!' Betty screamed. 'Keep your eyes shut. Don't be afraid, Sarah, we'll save you.'

"Charlie ran around as if he were crazy, crying and shouting, 'It's my fault, it's all my fault! Hold on tight, Sarah. I'll bring Stanley. He'll get you down. Hold on!'

" 'No, no!' cried Betty when Charlie started off at a run. 'Come back, Charlie. We must n't leave her that way, she might fall. You'll have to tie her in the tree.'

"Betty had on a new pinafore made out of strong gingham. She took it off and with Charlie's knife they slit it into strips from neck to hem and knotted them together and Charlie climbed the tree and tied the gingham around my waist and to the trunk of the tree so that I could n't fall out.

"Then Charlie ran to the house for help, and it did n't take Father and Stanley long to get there. Stanley carried me down to the lower branches and handed me to Father, and in a little while I felt all right again.

"I thought Father would think I was brave, but he did n't at all. He was cross because Charlie had urged me to do such a foolish thing and because I had n't had courage to say I was afraid. He said we would have to take our own money to buy gingham for another apron for Betty. We did, and Aggie

made it, and it was prettier than the one she had torn up, for Aggie worked a cross-stitch pattern in red around the hem.

"For a long time I could not bear to go near grandfather's persimmon tree, and I have never forgotten the lesson I learned that day."

DOGS

Bobby wanted a dog. He never remembered having wanted anything so much in all his life before. If he had his choice, he would prefer a mahogany-colored bull terrier, he told Grandma, but would gladly take any kind of a dog—even a common yellow dog.

"It's a shame you can't have a dog," said Grandma sympathetically. Every boy should have a dog, I say. We always had dogs—collies and hounds and ordinary dogs, and once we had a wonderful fox terrier. He belonged to brother Charlie, who loved dogs as much as any one I ever knew, though I had some claim on him, too. The way we got Sport, that was his name, well—you might like to hear about that.

"Mother was going to the city to visit Uncle John, and Charlie and I were going along. Neither of us had ever been on the steam cars before, and we were all excited about it. We talked of nothing else for days. I hardly noticed my new buttoned shoes or my velvet bonnet. Mother was excited, too, at the last. She wore a brown dress with a

great many buttons up the front and a bonnet with a plume. I thought she looked beautiful, and I think Father did, too, for when he had put us in the train at Clayville it seemed as if he could n't leave us. He took us into the train and found us seats, and told Mother over and over where she was to change cars and what to do if Uncle John should n't be there to meet us, and gave her so many directions that Mother got nervous.

" 'Yes, yes, dear, I know. Do go now or the train will start before you get out.'

"Father laughed and got off. Then he came rushing back all out of breath just as the train was starting because, after all he had forgotten to give Mother the tickets.

"With a ringing of bells and a puffing of the engine we were off, and Charlie and I settled down to a day of solid enjoyment. We had a nice lunch that the girls had packed—chicken and pickles and election cake, with apples and cookies to eat between times. Everything seemed wonderful! The fine red plush seats, the conductor in his blue uniform and brass buttons, the rushing at such a swift pace through the country—it was like fairyland to me.

"But I got car-sick, and then pretty soon Charlie got a cinder in his eye. Poor Mother had her hands full. She made a pillow for me with the wraps and I lay down, but I did n't get any better. A lady across the aisle handed Mother a piece of stiff writing paper and told her to pin it inside my dress. Mother did, but it only scratched my chest and didn't help me. Mother got a flaxseed out of her bag and put it in Charlie's eye. It worked the cinder out, but his eye was red and swollen, and we were all glad when we came to the city. Uncle John was waiting for us, and we got on a horse car and rode to within a short distance of his home.

"The next morning we felt fine and started out to explore with our cousins, Lily and Tom. The street was lined on each side with horse-chestnut trees, and children were picking up the glossy, brown nuts in baskets. But Charlie and I did n't think much of picking up nuts we could n't eat. Charlie did n't like the city at all. The houses were too tall and dark to suit him and the back yards too little and the grass not meant to be trodden on. A fellow could n't whistle or make a bit of noise without annoying some one,

and there were no dogs, except an occasional fat pug or a curly poodle.

"Lily and Tom took us to the park at the end of the street for a walk. Charlie said it was n't as big as our cow pasture, and Tom said he knew it was and that anyhow we had no seats in our cow pasture. Just then a horse car went along, and after that Charlie would n't do anything but sit on a bench and watch the horse cars come and go. He had found one thing he liked in the city, though he said that if he owned the cars he would have nice, sleek, well-fed horses like Father's instead of such skinny ones.

"Sometimes Lily and I would play in the park with our dolls. One afternoon, a couple of days before we were to start for home, I was sitting on the bench beside Charlie when what should come running around the corner but a dirty, little, white dog with black spots! Not that we could see the black spots then. He was too dirty for that, all covered with mud and blood. His tongue was hanging out, and he ran as if he were exhausted, in a zigzag line, blindly. He was limping, too.

"I think Charlie would have run right out and picked the poor dog up, but he saw us

almost as soon as we saw him. And when Charlie gave a low whistle, he ran over and crawled under the bench we were sitting on. He was hardly out of sight when around the same corner came a crowd of boys and men, waving sticks and clubs, and led by a policeman, brandishing a revolver, all of them yelling, 'Mad dog! Mad dog! Mad dog!'

"There was some shrubbery behind the bench, but still if they came over they would be sure to see the dog. I was so frightened that I hardly breathed while they poked with their sticks around the low bushes that grew in clumps here and there. The fact that we sat so quietly saved the dog's life, for they thought we had not even seen the dog. They went hurrying on and were soon all out of sight—or we thought they were. But it happened that a boy had fallen behind and turned back home just in time to see Charlie get poor Sport out from under the bench.

"He gave the alarm, and Charlie and I, with the dog wrapped in Charlie's coat, had hardly reached the kitchen and explained things to Tom, who was making a kite in the back yard, when we could hear shouting down the street.

"We looked around for a hiding place. There was none. Then Tom thought of the attic. He and Charlie and the dog would

Charlie and I with the dog reached the kitchen

hide in the attic. Up the back stairs they rushed and on up to the attic. I slipped into the sitting room where Lily was practicing and picked up a book just as there came a loud knocking at the front door.

"Aunt Mary went to the door, and she was very indignant and cross when a policeman asked her to give up a mad dog. Whoever heard of such a thing? A mad dog, indeed! She had no dog at all, nor ever had had a

dog, she said. He was welcome to come in if he wanted to and look for himself. But Aunt Mary was so sincere that the officer apologized for troubling her and went away, taking the crowd with him.

"When the boys came down from the attic and brought the dog, Mother and Aunt Mary were frightened and did n't know what to do with him. But Tom found a big box and they put him in that until Uncle John came home.

" 'Is he really mad, John?' asked Aunt Mary anxiously as Uncle John examined the little dog.

" 'No more mad than I am,' Uncle John answered, and he declared that he was a valuable little dog, too, but that if he were turned over to the police he would be shot. He didn't know what to do with him, as they had no room for a dog.

"Charlie begged so hard to take the dog home with us, and he was so pretty and cute after he had had a bath and a rest, licking our hands and wagging his stubby tail, that Mother finally consented. Charlie named him Sport because he said that name suited him.

"And going home Charlie and I rode most of the time in the baggage car with Sport, and we were so busy taking care of him that we were not sick a bit and did n't get any cinders in our eyes."

THE LAST INDIAN

"Last summer," began Alice one evening when the children came to Grandma's room, "when we were in the country we went to the valley where the last Indians in this county were seen—the last wild Indians, I mean."

"Were there any wild Indians around when you were a little girl, Grandma?" asked Bobby eagerly.

"Well, no," said Grandma thoughtfully. "But my Father remembered very well when bands of Indians went through the country on hunting expeditions. They were thought to be of the Delaware tribe, but were called Cornplanter Indians, probably because they cultivated large fields of corn as well as hunted and fished for their living. It was customary, during the winter, for bands of these Indians to hunt deer and other game in the forests. They would follow the chase for weeks at a time. Father said that as each deer was killed it was carefully dressed and hung high in some near-by tree, beyond the reach of wolves and dogs. At the close of the hunting

season the carcasses were gathered together and taken to the Indian camp.

"But though the Indians were gone when I was a little girl, there were many things left to remind us of them. Old trees, blazed to mark Indian trails, still stood, and arrowheads and darts were often ploughed up in the fields. My brothers had quite a collection of them, and they also had a tomahawk that looked very much like a hatchet.

"And there was one Indian left, too. I almost forgot about him—old John Cornplanter. He was supposed to have belonged to the Cornplanter Indians, but no one knew much about him. He lived alone on an unsurveyed piece of land and was seldom seen except when he brought his skins to sell or came to the store for occasional supplies. He lived as his forbears had lived, by hunting and fishing, and, like them, he had a cornfield.

"He made few friends because he was gruff and short of speech and surly in manner. He had a quick temper which flared up at the least thing, and some of the men and boys teased him on purpose to make him angry. Father said it was n't right.

"One day when Father and my brother Stanley were coming through our woods they heard a noise like that of some one groaning. Hunting around, they presently found the Indian, John Cornplanter, helpless and unconscious, with what turned out to be a broken leg. They carried him into the cabin in the sugar grove and Stanley went for the doctor. The doctor set his leg. For a time they thought he would die, for he had been exposed to the weather for hours before Father found him. But he got better, though slowly, and for weeks he lay on one of the bunks in the cabin, and Father took care of him and Mother sent him things he liked to eat.

"At first I was afraid to go near the cabin, but after a while I got brave enough to venture in with Father. Then it was n't long till Charlie and I were visiting Cornplanter every day, carrying him food and cool drinks.

"When he got better, he wove pretty baskets and carved things out of wood and made Charlie a bow and arrow. After he got well and went home, he often came back to see us, bringing presents of fish or game,

or maybe a basket of wild strawberries or early greens. Charlie and I liked to walk back with him through the woods as far as the edge of our farm, and sometimes he would build a fire and we would have a meal of some kind of game, cornbread baked on a stone heated in the fire, and wild honey.

"He taught Charlie new ways to set traps and cure skins, and he showed me where the first trailing arbutus was to be found, hiding, fragrant and pink, under the brown leaves. He knew where the mistletoe grew and where the cardinal built her nest, and he could mimic any kind of a bird or animal.

"But no one knew John as we did. As he grew older his manner became gruffer and his temper shorter. People were afraid of him, and there was some talk of making him leave the country.

"In the winter he would go for miles and miles hunting and trapping, for even then game was not so plentiful as it had been. One winter Cornplanter brought a deer he had shot and dressed to Orbison's woods and hung it in a tree, just as his people before him had done, until he should be ready to take it the rest of the way home.

"That night there was a light fall of snow. The next morning some boys on their way to school spied the deer hanging in the tree and, thinking to tease John, they moved the deer to the very top of the tree and fastened it there. Then they went on to school, not thinking but that the Indian would immediately discover the deer.

"But Cornplanter was old and his sight was poor. When he came along a little later, he saw only that the deer was not where he had left it, and, thinking that it had been stolen, he set out to follow the tracks the boys had made in the snow.

"Mr. Carson, on his way to the store, saw John stalking along, head down, in the direction of the schoolhouse, but thought nothing of it. When he got to the store he would not have mentioned the fact had he not found the men there gravely shaking their heads over the joke the boys had played on John Cornplanter. It was n't safe to joke with John, they said. Bud McGill, who had helped move the deer, had gone around to the store and told about it. So when Mr. Carson said he had seen John going in the direction of the schoolhouse, they were

Mr. Carson saw John going in the direction of the schoolhouse

all greatly disturbed. Several men started immediately for the schoolhouse. No telling what John might do!

"In the meantime John had arrived at the schoolhouse and opening the door without knocking, stepped inside, closed the door, and leaned against it. He was a forbidding figure, dressed in furs from head to foot, a gun at his side, a dark frown on his face. He looked at the teacher.

"'Where deer?' he demanded. 'Where deer?'

"He thought his deer had been stolen. He had followed the tracks to the schoolhouse and now he wanted the deer.

"We all knew what the boys had done. We looked at each other, waiting for some one to speak.

"John Cornplanter waited, too, his back to the door.

"I thought about Charlie, at home sick. If he had been there, he might have straightened things out. I was the only other person who knew John Cornplanter well and did not fear him. I went over to him and explained as well as I could about the deer just being moved and not stolen, and that the boys were only in fun and meant no harm. When I finished, it was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop. Cornplanter did not like to be teased. Would he think it a joke on himself that he had not seen the deer, or would he be furious?

"Suddenly he smiled, and the teacher with a sigh of relief announced morning intermission.

"A few minutes later when a group of anxious men came in sight of the schoolhouse they stopped to listen in amazement

to a series of unusual sounds—a bull frog croaking hoarsely, an owl calling to its mate, a cardinal singing sweetly, the long-drawn-out wail of the whip-poor-will, the joyful note of the lark, the sharp barking of a squirrel.

"And what they saw surprised them even more, for there was the Indian, surrounded by children, as he mimicked for their amusement one after another of the animals and birds he knew so well.

"It's bedtime now, so run along and we'll have another story soon."

A PRESENT FOR MOTHER

"Goody, goody!" sang Pink, dancing into Grandma's room one evening, "It's only four weeks till Christmas."

"And I'm saving all my allowance for Christmas presents," Bobby announced. "I'm going to get Mother an umbrella—hers is slit and it has a long handle—or a sparkly comb for her hair or some silk stockings."

"Why!" exclaimed Grandma in surprise. "How did a little boy ever think of such nice, appropriate things?"

"Oh, Mother always makes a list," Alice explained carefully. "She puts down all the things she'd like to have, and we pick from that. You see, the first year we bought our own presents to give, Bobby got her an iron-handle at the five-and-ten-cent store and she always uses an electric iron, and I gave her a book that she already had, so after that she made us a list. But Bobby won't have money enough for any of the things he named," she said, with scorn for her brother's idea of prices. "I know very well he won't."

"Well, you might all three go together," Grandma suggested, "just as brother Charlie and I did once for a present we got for our mother. Her birthday came in November, and we wanted to give her something nice—a real store present—so we put our money together. Of course there was nothing at our store, but twice a year, in the spring and again in the fall, Mr. Simon, the peddler, came straight from the city, and it was from him that we planned to buy Mother's present.

"Mr. Simon was no common peddler, no, indeed. He was little and round and fat and bald-headed—not handsome at all, but one of those people whose looks you never think about after you know them. He always staid over night with us, and because Father would take no money for keeping him he left tucked away some place a little present that Mother said more than paid his bill.

"We all liked to see Mr. Simon come. He brought Father the latest news from the city and told Mother and the girls about the newest fashions and customs. I remember when he told Mother how some people were putting wire screens over their windows to keep the flies out, and how she laughed

and said, 'The very idea of shutting out the fresh air like that!'

"He would tell stories to us children and recite poetry, and when he opened up his packs in the evening, how we all crowded around!

"He didn't show everything at all the houses, but he did at ours—fine Irish linens, velvets and satins, beads and brooches and wonderful shawls.

"It was a shawl that Charlie and I meant to buy for Mother—a soft, creamy, silk shoulder shawl. Aunt Louisa had just such a shawl, and when Mr. Simon was showing his things that spring we decided on that shawl the minute we saw it. We coaxed Mother to try it on, and she threw it around her shoulders to please us. It was so soft and lovely and the creamy tint was so becoming to Mother that we would have bought it immediately, but, alas! when we slipped out to count our money we didn't have enough—not nearly enough.

"'But we don't need it till fall,' said Charlie. 'Let's get Mr. Simon to keep it for us till he comes next time, and then we'll have enough money.'

Mother threw the shawl around her shoulders to please us

"When we went back to the sitting room the shawl had been put away in its flat little box. At the first opportunity we asked Mr. Simon if he would save it for us, and he said he would.

"'It won't be too much trouble, carrying it around so long?' I asked as an afterthought.

"'Not a bit of trouble,' he answered cheerfully. 'Tis no heavier than one of your own black curls.'

"But the next day we forgot all about the shawl, for Mother had lost her best brooch. It was a cameo with a carved gold border set around with pearls. It had been Father's wedding present to Mother, and she always wore it even with her everyday print dresses. That brooch looked as well on a common gown as it did on a fine silk. Mother said it was like some people, they were so fine and wonderful that they were at home in any company.

"Mother missed the brooch that night when she went to take it off. She had gone back downstairs and searched carefully all over the sitting-room floor, but she had n't found it. She did n't mention losing it until

after Mr. Simon had gone. Then we hunted all over the house and the yard and the garden, and Charlie kept on hunting when everyone else had given up. He climbed the trees and looked in all the bird nests around, because he had heard that sometimes, when birds are building, they carry valuable things to their nests. And he searched in every other unlikely place you could think of, but he did n't find the brooch.

"We were very busy that summer, for besides our regular work we had to earn enough money to pay for Mother's shawl. I weeded in the garden for five cents a day, and Charlie picked potato bugs, and we sold blackberries and did all sorts of things. When it was time for Mr. Simon to come again we had our reward, for safely hidden away under a loose board in the attic floor, was enough money to pay for Mother's present.

"But by this time we had changed our minds about what we wanted to give her—instead of the shawl we thought we would give her a brooch. We met Mr. Simon at the gate and asked him anxiously if he had saved the shawl, for we were afraid that

maybe he wouldn't like our not taking it in the spring.

"'Indeed, I did,' he answered. 'I haven't so much as opened that box since I was here before.'

"Then Charlie and I told him that if he could sell the shawl to someone else we would like to buy instead a brooch for Mother. He said he could sell the shawl, but why buy our mother a brooch when she already had one so much finer than anything he had to offer? We told him about Mother's brooch being lost, and he was awfully sorry. We selected a new brooch, and Mother was pleased with it and fastened it into her collar right away.

"The next morning I came into the sitting room, after seeing Mr. Simon off, to find Father and Mother talking seriously together.

"'I can't understand it,' Father was saying. And I saw that Mother held in one hand the cream-colored shawl that Charlie and I had meant to buy for her.

"'Oh, is that what Mr. Simon left this time?' cried Belle, coming in just behind me. 'Who gets it, Mother, Aggie or me? I think I ought to have it because I am going

to be married, but Aggie will say it's her turn because I got the lace collar last time.'

"But Mother did not answer, and we saw with surprise that in her other hand she held her brooch—not her new brooch, but the one that had been lost.

"'It was in the box with the shawl,' she said quietly, and looked at Father. How had the brooch come into Mr. Simon's possession, they were wondering, and why had he returned it in this mysterious way? Had he found it the night Mother lost it and had he now repented of having kept it?

"'You had the shawl around your shoulders the night you lost the brooch, Mother,' Belle said. 'Maybe the brooch got fastened in it then.'

"'That would be perfectly possible,' said Father gravely, 'but how many times do you think Simon has showed that shawl in the last six months?'

"Then I found my voice.

"'Oh, not once, Father!' I cried. 'He never even opened the box since he was here last time. He said so himself.' And I told them how he had been saving the

shawl all that time for Charlie and me. Mother laughed happily and said we were dear children, and Father picked up the county paper with an air of relief.

"Next time I think, yes, I know that next time we shall have a Christmas story."

A CHRISTMAS BARRING OUT

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through
the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.

Bobby and Alice and Pink had hung their stockings by the living-room mantle and, though it was very, very early, they decided to go to bed. They always wanted to go to bed early on Christmas Eve. Morning seemed to come so much more quickly when they went to bed early. They would n't even wait for a story. They would just say good night to Grandma and go right to bed.

"Why!" exclaimed Grandma in surprise, when they had explained their intentions to her, "you must n't go to bed so soon. You'd be awake in the morning before daylight! Come in and visit with me a while and I'll see if I can't think up a story to tell you, the same as on other nights."

So they went in and sat down on their stools in front of the fire. Grandma put on her spectacles, but, instead of her knitting, she took up her Bible. The children were very still while she read the story of the first

Christmas—how in a stable in Bethlehem the baby Christ was born, and how an angel appeared to the shepherds, who were watching their flocks, and told them about the Savior's birth, and then a host of angels came and praised God, saying, "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men," just as we sing today on Christmas.

"I think," said Grandma, "that I will tell you tonight about a Christmas treat at our school. When I was a little girl we had a custom, handed down from pioneer times, called 'barring out.' A few days before Christmas the teacher would arrive to find the schoolhouse door securely fastened. Before he was admitted he would have to sign a paper promising to 'treat' his pupils.

"In those days we did n't have much 'store' candy, and we looked forward for weeks to the Christmas treat we got at school. You would n't think much of it today—six sticks of red and white striped candy apiece, wintergreen and sassafras and clove and maybe one of horehound. My, but it tasted good to us! We did n't eat it all up at once, either. No, indeed!

"But one year we did n't know whether to look for a treat or not. The teacher, a Mr. Hazen, was from Clayville, and he had been heard to say that he did not believe in 'barring out' or in being forced to treat his pupils. Nevertheless we all came early to school one morning and locked him out.

"While we all cried 'Treat! Treat!' at the tops of our voices, William Orbison opened the window a tiny bit and thurst out the paper they had prepared for the teacher to sign, but he refused to touch it.

"This was not alarming, as most all of the teachers stayed out for an hour or two just for fun. We played games and had a good time. But by time for morning intermission the older pupils had begun to get anxious. Could it be possible that the teacher really did not mean to treat? At noon he was still out, walking up and down the playground, clapping his hands together, stamping his feet, and rubbing his ears to keep warm. We were anxious in earnest now. The wood box was empty and the fire was getting low. There was no water in the water bucket, and some of the younger children were coaxing for drinks.

"No teacher in our recollection had ever refused to treat. There was an old rule that if the teacher persisted in refusing to treat he was to be ducked in the nearest stream of water. We had heard of instances when this had been done, but no one wanted to try it. The older pupils stood around in frightened little groups, and some of the smaller children were crying openly, when the teacher knocked loudly on the door and asked that the paper be handed out to him.

"But the paper had disappeared! We searched all over the room, but it was nowhere to be found. Again the teacher knocked and asked rather impatiently for the paper.

"Then William Orbison sat down at his desk and hurriedly prepared another paper and handed it out the window to the teacher. He looked at it in a puzzled way for a little bit, smiled a queer smile, and without a word signed the paper and handed it back to William. Then he was admitted and took up books, but all afternoon he kept smiling to himself as if he knew a joke on some one. We felt uneasy, though we did n't know why.

"After school that evening my brother Truman asked William Orbison to let him see

the paper the teacher had signed. When he read it, he gave a long whistle of astonishment.

The teacher looked at the paper in a puzzled way

And what do you think William had done? In the fuss and excitement of writing out the second paper he had omitted the word 'treat.' The teacher had promised nothing! That explained his smiles. We were a disappointed lot of children, I can tell you.

"We should n't have any Christmas treat, for after the way the teacher had talked about treating, no one thought he would treat if he could help it, and here was a way out for him. The next day we were perfectly

sure he did not intend to treat, for when William Orbison left out a word in his reading lesson the teacher said, 'Watch yourself, William. Leaving out words is getting to be quite a habit with you.'

"Other years we could hardly wait till the day before Christmas. We wore our best clothes, and right after dinner we would speak pieces, have spelling and ciphering matches, sing songs, have our treat, and play games the rest of the afternoon. Lots of the older brothers and sisters would come to visit, and they would play with us and the teacher would play, too, and we would have lots of fun.

"But this year I should rather have stayed at home and watched the Christmas preparations at our house, for there would n't be much fun at school without any treat.

"It was a cold, windy morning, and Father took us to school in the sled. We had lessons in the morning as usual, and in the afternoon recitations and songs and a little play that the teacher had helped us get up. Truman gave 'Hamlet's Soliloquy,' and did it very well, too. And Charlie had a piece, but he forgot all but the first verse. We were so interested that we did n't think about the treat, and you

can imagine how surprised we were when the teacher, instead of dismissing us, said that we would now have an unexpected but very welcome visitor. The door opened, and in came old Santa Claus with a white beard and a red coat and on his back the biggest bag! You should have seen our eyes pop! Of course it was n't the really, truly Santa Claus who comes in the night and fills the stockings. Oh, no, this was just a pretend Santa.

"He put his bag down on the teacher's platform, and after he had made a little speech he opened it up.

"And what do you suppose was in that bag? Candy! Cream candy and chocolate drops and clear candy, red and yellow, shaped like animals and horns and baskets, such candy as we had never seen before. A sack for each pupil.

"As we went up, one by one, the smallest first, to get our treat, Santa asked each one of us to recite something for him. The smaller children knew verses out of their readers, and some of us recited the pieces we had said earlier in the afternoon. But how we all laughed when Longford Henlen, who

was the tallest boy in school, could n't think of anything to say but,

"I had a little dog, his name was Jack,
Put him in the barn, he jumped through a crack.

"And now to bed, to bed, and go right to sleep. I've heard that if Santa Claus comes and finds children awake he goes away and comes back later. That is, he means to come back later, but he has been known to get so busy he forgot to come back at all. So say your prayers and go to sleep."

A VOCABULARY

(This vocabulary contains only words of unusual difficulty in spelling, pronunciation, and meaning.)

KEY TO PRONUNCIATION

ā *as in* āle	ė̄ *as in* ė̄vent	ŏ *as in* ŏdd
å *as in* sen′åte	ĕ *as in* ĕnd	ŏ *as in* cŏn-nect′
ă *as in* ăm	ē *as in* hē̆r	o͞o *as in* fo͞od
ă *as in* fi′năl	ī *as in* īce	o͝o *as in* fo͝ot
ȧ *as in* ȧsk	ĭ *as in* ĭll	ū *as in* ūse
ä *as in* ärm	ō *as in* ōld	ŭ *as in* ŭp
â *as in* câre	ȯ *as in* ȯbey	u͞ *as in* u͞nite
ē *as in* ēve	ô *as in* ôrb	û *as in* ûrn

alpaca (ăl păk′*ȧ*). A kind of cloth made from the hair of the alpaca, an animal of the sheep family.

arbutus (är′bū tŭs). A plant having small, sweet-smelling pink and white blossoms; known also as the May-flower, and ground laurel.

ascension (*ă* sĕn′shŭn). Rising in the air, as a balloon.

auction (ôk′shŭn). A public sale, where each article is sold to the one offering the most money for it.

barricaded (băr′ĭ kād′ĕd). Filled with materials making it difficult for one to pass.

beaux (bōz). Men paying special attention to certain young women.

Bethlehem (bĕth′lė̄ hĕm). The village where Christ was born.

brooch (brōch). An ornamental clasp; a breastpin.

calico (kăl′ĭ kō). A kind of cotton cloth.
cameo (kăm′ė ō). A gem containing a carving, usually in the shape of a head.
Canterbury (kăn′tẽr bĕr ĭ) *bell.* A plant having lovely bell-shaped blossoms.
carcasses (kär′kȧs ĕz). Dear bodies.
cardinal (kär′dĭ năl). A small red bird.
cashmere (kăsh′mēr). A cloth made of fine woolen material.
chiffonier (shĭf′ŏ nēr′). A high chest of drawers, with mirror.
ciphering (sī′fẽr ĭng). Doing arithmetic examples.
circuit (sûr′kĭt). When a minister was pastor of several churches at the same time, the circuit was his regular journeying around the whole number.
code (kōd). A system of rules governing one's own conduct.
colony (kŏl′ŏ nĭ). A company of people going to a new place to make their home.
conference (kŏn′fẽr ĕns). A meeting for the purpose of deciding some question.
conspicuous (kŏn spĭk′ū ŭs). In plain sight.
Copenhagen (kō′pĕn hā′gĕn). A children's game.
cravat (krȧ văt′). A man's necktie.
cretonne (krė tŏn′). A strong cotton cloth, prettily colored.
crocheted (krŏ shād′). Made out of thread woven together by means of a hook.

dahlia (däl′yȧ). A plant with showy blossoms.
delaine (dė lān′). A kind of light woolen cloth.

Delaware (dĕl′*a* wâr). Name of an early tribe of Indians; name of a state of the United States.
dolman (dŏl′măn). A woman's cloak with cape-like pieces instead of sleeves.

Dominique (dŏm′ĭ nēk′). A variety of fowl something like the Plymouth Rock.

Egypt (ē′jĭpt). A country in Africa.
election (ē lĕk′shŭn). The choosing of one to hold some public office.
embarrassed (ĕm băr′răst). Ashamed; mortified.
epidemic (ĕp′ĭ dĕm′ĭk). Spreading to many people in a community, as a disease.

fluting (flo͞ot′ĭng). Ruffles so made as to have a wavy appearance.
furlough (fûr′lō). A soldier's vacation from the army.

gnarled (närld). Twisted or rugged.
gnawed (nôd). Bitten apart, little by little with effort.
gospel (gŏs′pĕl). The story of the life of Christ.

husking (hŭsk′ĭng). Taking the husks from ears of corn.

immersion (ĭ mûr′shŭn). Baptism by dipping the person into the water all over.
infare (ĭn′fâr). A party given by the husband's family as a welcome to the new wife.
institute (ĭn′stĭ tūt). A meeting of school teachers.
Israel (ĭz′rā ĕl). Ancient kingdom of Palestine, the scene of the stories of the Bible.

larvae (lär′vē). The tiny worms hatched from insect eggs.

leghorn (lĕg′hôrn). A variety of fowl that gets its name from Leghorn, a city in Italy.

loam (lōm). Clayey earth or soil.

lozenge (lŏz′ĕnj). A kind of candy.

mahogany (mȧ hŏg′ȧ nĭ). A tree having a reddish brown wood.

mature (mȧ tūr′). To become ripe.

mincemeat (mĭns′mēt′). A mixture of meat, apples, raisins, etc., to be used as a pie filling.

mistletoe (mĭs′ ′l tō). A vine having waxy white berries.

muskrat (mŭsk′răt′). A small fur-bearing animal living in holes in the banks of streams or lakes.

myriads (mĭr′ĭ ădz). Large numbers.

parsonage (pär ′s'n ăj). The house occupied by the minister of a church.

persimmon (pēr sĭm′ŭn). A plum-like fruit.

Pharaoh (fā′rō). The name of the kings of Egypt in the long-ago time.

pioneer (pī′ō nēr′). One who goes first to make a home in an unsettled country.

pippin (pĭp′ĭn). A general name for apple. Here means "something extra good."

pithy (pĭth′ĭ). Soft and spongy.

plagues (plāgz). Great troubles.

plaid (plăd). Woven in the form of squares.

Plymouth (plĭm′ŭth). The town settled by the Pilgrims.

portico ((pōr′tĭ kō). A porch or piazza.
preserve (prẽ zûrv′). To make to last.
proclamation (prŏk′la̍ mā′shŭn). A public announcement.
Psalm (säm). One of the verses from the Book of Psalms in the Bible.

quilting (kwĭlt′ĭng). A meeting of women for the purpose of making a bedquilt.

recollection (rĕk′ŏ lĕk′shŭn). That which is called to mind; a memory.
recommendation (rĕk′ŏ mĕn dā′shŭn). Expression in favor of something.
recruiting (rẽ krōōt′ĭng). Persuading new men to join the army or navy.
recruits (rẽ krōōtz′). Men who had recently joined the army or navy.
reveille (rẽ vāl′yă). The bugle call awakening the soldiers in the morning.
Reverend (rĕv′ẽr ĕnd). A clergyman's title; one who is to be honored.
ruching (rōōsh′ĭng). A plaited strip of lace or net.

sassafras (săs′a̍ frăs). A kind of tree, from the root bark of which a flavoring extract is made.
Savior (sāv′yẽr). Christ.
scarred (skärd). Having the marks of old cuts.
serenade (sĕr′ẽ nād′). Singing or playing outside a house as a greeting to one or more within the house.
shirred (shûrd). Sewed in such a way as to make the material hang full and loose.

soliloquy (sŏ lĭl′ŏ kwĭ). A talking to oneself.
sorghum (sôr′gŭm). A sirup made from a variety of corn plant.
stealth (stĕlth). In secret.
suet (sū′ĕt). A hard fat.
superstitious (sū′pẽr stĭsh′ŭs). Having fear of what is unknown; believing in signs.
symbol (sĭm′bŏl). A sign.

telescope (tĕl′ĕ skōp). A kind of traveling bag.
Timotheus (tĭ mō′thĕ ŭs). A man spoken of in the Bible.
tithes (tīthz). Tenths. What one gives toward the support of a church.

unsurveyed (ŭn′sŭr vād′). Not measured.

vouchers (vouch′ẽrz). Papers showing money is due one.

wagered (wā′jẽrd). Bet.
waistcoat (wāst′kōt). A man's garment worn under the coat; a vest.
whinny (hwĭn′ĭ). The sound made by a horse; a neighing.
worsted (wo͝os′tĕd). A cloth made of soft woolen yarn.
wrenched (rĕncht). Twisted or pulled off by force.